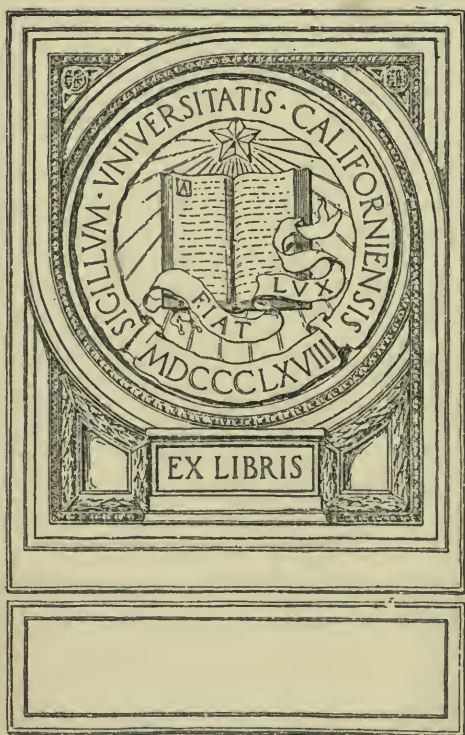
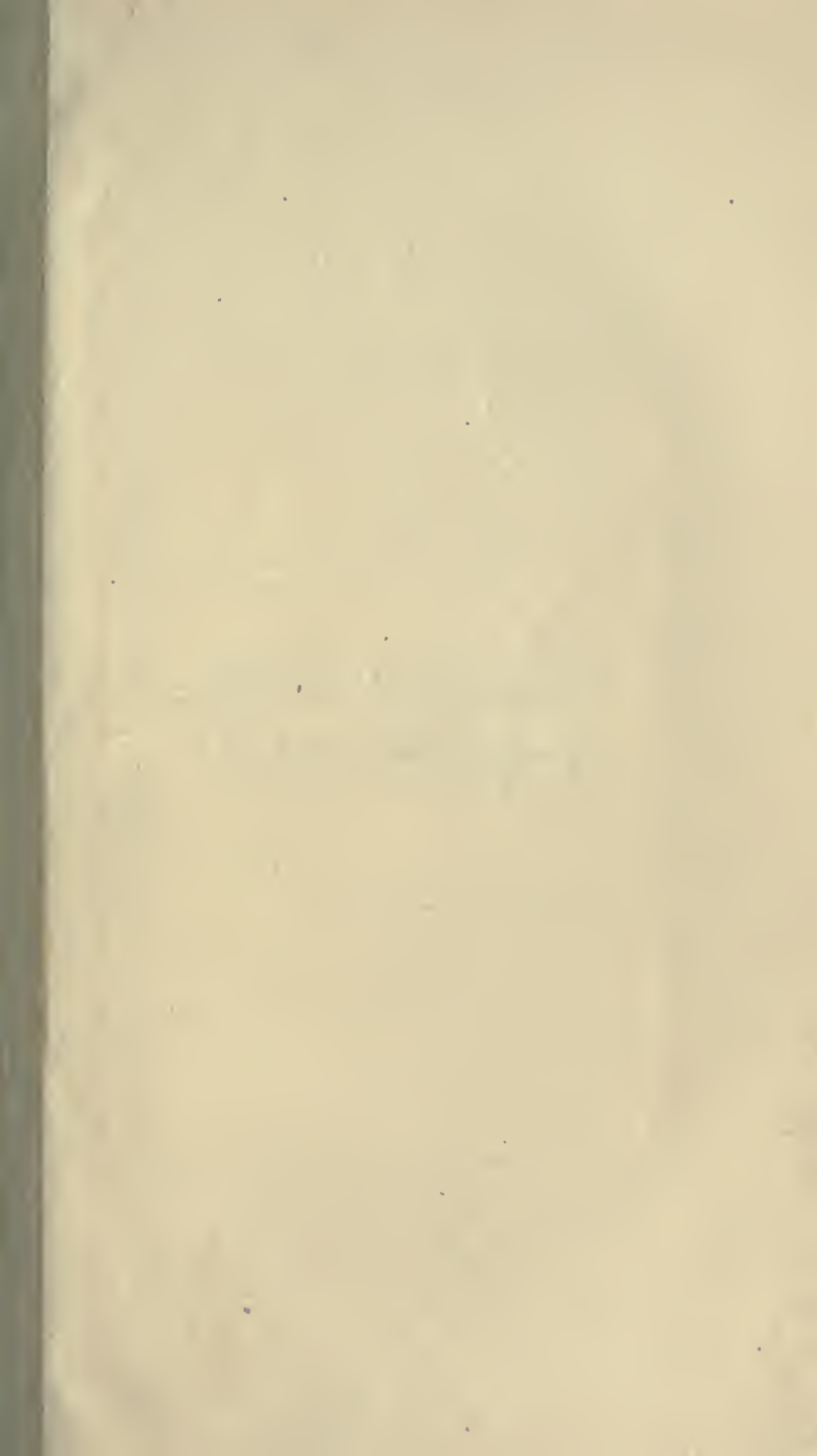
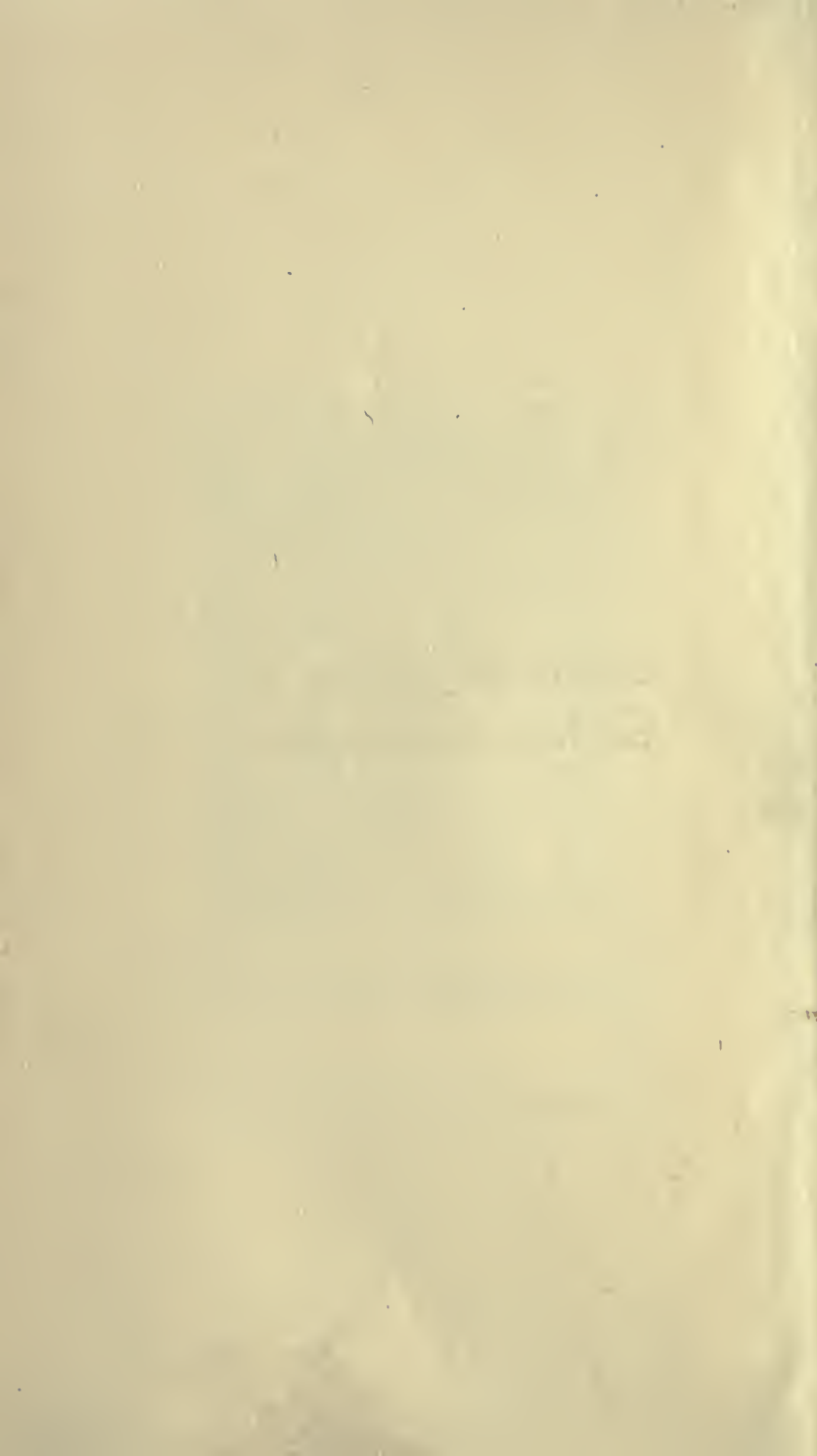












*Behind the Scenes at  
German Headquarters*



# *Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters*

::    :: *By Henri Domelier* ::    ::

*With an Introduction by Maurice Barrès*

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TO MONSIEUR MAURICE BARRÈS,  
President of *la Ligue des Patriotes*.

MY DEAR MASTER,

During fifty-two long months of German oppression your stirring articles in the *Echo de Paris*, in spite of a strict censorship and pitiless repression, have reached us, sometimes regularly, sometimes at long intervals. The breath of patriotism with which they were inspired, the ineradicable confidence which never deserted you, were a precious source of comfort to us, completely isolated as we were from our beloved France, and not one of my compatriots who have had the good fortune to read them will contradict me, when I say that they have helped greatly to keep our spirit firm in the presence of the enemy, and to keep alive our constant hope.

The odious campaign against your noble personality, led by the infamous *Gazette des Ardennes*, the low insults poured out for us by the Alsatian renegade, René Prévost, have given us eloquent proof of your noble mission of defending the French conscience against the perfidious attacks of Boche hypocrisy. . . . It will be the great honour of your life to have been splashed by this infected mud with which they sought, through you and every good Frenchman they decried, to sully the honour of our country and to shake the stoutest hearts. They merely succeeded in increasing our sympathy and admiration for you and your colleagues, for the patriotic Press, whom the Kaiser's scribblers, and their French allies of the "Defeatist" persuasion, so basely attacked.

We, the victims of the barbarian invasion, have listened to the counsel of Deroulède's successor in *la Ligue des Patriotes*, and your example, reflected in your articles in support of vengeance, have laid down our duty for us: "To hold out at all costs; for victory was the prize of our tenacity"; in a word, "We *must* win!"

Thank you, dear Master, for the immense service you have rendered us. Thanks to you our spirit did not falter for a single instant; we never despaired. On the contrary, we held out, and we have won.

For this reason you will permit one of your admirers to dedicate to you these modest pages, the sole merit of which is that they give the impressions of a witness who has seen, judged, and suffered, and who will *never* forget!

HENRI DOMELIER.

Charleville, 15th March, 1919.



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## PREFACE

GERMANY systematically set herself to destroy, morally and physically, everything French on which she could lay her hands.

She tried to break down the health of the French prisoners of war in her camps. To this end, she brought to bear all her refined and hypocritical malevolence, all her science. She never ensured their proper nourishment. From 1914 onwards she subjected them to a terrible régime of starvation. And yet at that time her store-houses were bursting with food. For the prisoners, the German winter of 1914-15 was terrible. Without clothes, and with bare feet, they prowled round the kitchens, and with fevered eyes searched the refuse bins for any offal that might relieve the torture of their empty stomachs a little.

The German scientists were well aware that the human organism, overburdened with physical labour and starved of food, cannot live, and that malnutrition is the best purveyor of tuberculosis. The hospitals were soon filled with tuberculous cases. Did German science come to their aid? Did it make any effort to save them? Herded in special camps, hypocritically christened "sanatoria," they were left to die for want of attention. When the French doctors protested about the thinness of the soup that was given to these unfortunate men who were in need of abundant nourishment, tainted soup made of nothing but potato peelings, a surgeon in charge replied: "What better could you wish for? Don't you know that the latest research has demonstrated that all the nutritive value of the potato lies in the skin? It is for their own good that we give the tuberculous cases soup made of potato peelings."

As the war dragged on, neutral commissions were allowed to inspect the camps. Then a cynical farce was played. In the offices of the Surgeon-in-Chief and the *Kommandatur*, where the daily menus were drawn up, an elaborate chart was posted. It was the work of learned professors. It was a long list of all substances considered nutritious, and against each class a scale marked the number of calories of food value contained in a given quantity.



## Preface

This list included some strange foods, and food for cattle, the *agouma*, the swede turnip, the sugar and ordinary beetroot and its leaves, the sweet acorn, barley, wheat, the Indian chestnut, cod's roe, etc. The normal daily ration for a human organism is stated to be 2,500 calories ; it is then very simple and quite scientific to feed a camp of prisoners, by giving them for their morning broth 10 kilograms of sweet acorns ; for their midday soup 10 kilograms of swede turnip (or cod's roe on the two days when meat is provided by the menu), and 10 kilograms of *agouma* for the evening stew. Theoretically this provides the number of calories necessary to maintain human life. It doesn't matter if, in reality (a cruel reality experienced by thousands of unhappy men), a man subjected to this régime for two months loses on an average nine kilograms in weight, and travels the road to death.

I give these details with all the necessary precision. To complete them, read the prisoners' stories, the reports of the commissions of inquiry ; read " In the Reprisal Camps," by Jean-Jules Dufour. It is a tragic book. You will see in these how the Germans scientifically killed the body. And now, to learn how, with the same learned and hypocritical infamy, they sought to kill the soul, read, " Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters," by Henri Domelier.

This testimony of a very honest man, who remained in Charleville, and saw at close quarters the methods of the great German leaders, is one of the most valuable documents that the world possesses on the political and moral offensive with which our infamous enemies reinforced their military actions.

Before 1914, M. Henri Domelier edited at Charleville a newspaper that supported national defence and Union. He foretold the war and the invasion through Belgium. In the eastern districts of our country it was easy to be a prophet. Danger breeds clear-sightedness. When the Ardennes were inundated by the enemy hordes, Domelier remained in his little town.

All the municipal officials had deserted their posts. There was no mayor, no municipal council left. M. Paul Gailly, a manufacturer, and Henri Domelier formed a municipal commission to re-establish the disorganized services. Our colleague filled the onerous, and often dangerous, position of secretary ; he experienced all the brutality of the Germans, and twice was sentenced to a week, and then a fortnight's imprisonment ; but he saw, at first hand, the methods of the German leaders and the working of their inmost soul.

Domelier did all he could to keep the population steadfast in confidence and hope. Further, this brave man accepted the post of Chief of the Intelligence Service for the English Headquarters



## Preface

at Liège. He organized the upkeep of our soldiers' graves and those of the allies who had died in hospital or in the reprisal camps. He founded the society for helping French and allied prisoners of war, trying to provide them with food (and being unable, alas ! to prevent 150 Englishmen dying of hunger at the camp of Tournes, near Charleville).

Read his book. You will feel a deep disgust for the Germany that Prussia built up. The theatricality of the Kaiser, the orgies of the Crown Prince, the obscene conduct of the officers, their men's indulgence in every kind of infamy, the requisitioning of French women, and the consequent association of respectable women and girls with prostitutes of the lowest type, theft, nameless bestiality—all this turns one sick. But the philosophy of the book, its chief importance is that it shows us how the German authorities tried to break the French inhabitants.

But never with any success. "We had confidence in ultimate victory," Domelier told me. "The Union was kept sacred. Socialists, Conservatives, Radicals—we found common ground in patriotism and resistance. Catholics, Protestants and Freemasons listened to the French speeches of the Abbé Bihéry, whom we had nicknamed '*le poilu en soutane*' (the frocked poilu, or 'fighting parson'), and the feast day of Joan of Arc was as much a national festival as the 14th of July. And your articles reached us."

A sign of this wonderful steadfastness of soul was the failure of the *Gazette des Ardennes*. But I should not say failure ! It helped to maintain French pride and confidence. Domelier says so distinctly : this paper, which the Germans had started to demoralize the French of the occupied regions and the French prisoners interned in Germany, helped, on the contrary, to maintain their *moral*. Its spirit of hate and lies horrified its readers. For my part I received many letters saying : "We liked you because the Boches insulted you daily."

Don't we notice the same thing in Paris ? The newspapers and journalists supported by Germany created a public following for those whom they daily abused.

Nevertheless, it is a terrible thing that Germany should have found among us so many traitors ready to do her bidding ! I am told : "They are often foreigners driven from their own country for theft or forgery." I know, I know ; but real Frenchmen wrote for the *Gazette des Ardennes*. It had correspondents among our prisoners of war, among the civilian population of the occupied countries. On the very day on which I am correcting the proofs of this page (20th June, 1919), I read the account of the trial of the Laon informers. One of them, Toqué, declares : "The

## Preface

Germans said to me one morning : ' If you want to earn a big sum of money at once, start a campaign against Maurice Barrès.' . . . " Lieutenant-Colonel Raynal, the hero of Fort Vaux, has told us how in the camp at Mainz he heard rumours which made out that I had made suggestions against the interests of the prisoners. " My notion of the source of these rumours, and the embarrassment of those who echoed them, showed me at once their Boche origin. . . . "

Some of these traitors have been discovered ; they will be shot or thrown into prison. But in face of this vast scheme of corruption, what negligence there must have been, amounting almost to connivance. The case of René Prévost, the infamous editor of the *Gazette des Ardennes*, is very characteristic. On the 28th October, 1918, he fled from Charleville with Ludendorff's soldiers. He is now in Switzerland. You know that this scoundrel is an Alsatian, born in the valley of Saint Amarin, of parents who are still living there, and to whose house some of our officers were imprudent enough to let themselves be enticed during the war. It was thought that they disowned their son. But as soon as the armistice was signed, they went to rejoin him, and then returned to Moosch, near Saint Amarin, bringing the traitor's child with them. This child is not responsible for his father, but is his proper place in French Alsace ? Ought not Prévost's parents to be treated as suspected informers ? Is it right that all these tainted people should continue to play their part on liberated soil which must be purged ?

Let us be on our guard against Germany, which, in war as in peace, will continue to suborn agents for the destruction of France. All that is required is to read and spread Domelier's book. No work reveals to us more clearly the double ignominy of the Boches, whether wearing their own colours or not.

MAURICE BARRÈS.

## FOREWORD

PRUSSIAN Germany has always followed with the deepest interest the expression and circulation of thought through the Press. She acts as foster-mother to her newspapers, and makes their task easier by putting her postal service at their disposal. It is not the German citizen who subscribes or buys a copy: the post comes between the publisher's office and its clients, arranges for so many copies of each paper, and delivers them from house to house even in the smallest centres.

In this way, it is possible from the number of labels of the Imperial post to establish the number of readers of any paper.

German officialdom keeps a no less watchful eye on the foreign Press. Every day a number of papers are confiscated.

Before the war Germany subscribed to the newspapers of our frontier districts, and from time to time a letter bearing a twenty-five centimes stamp would arrive promptly from Coblenz or Cologne, demanding a copy of some penny paper that had not reached its destination.

As far as the Press is concerned, the invasion of 1914-18 was simply a repetition of that of 1870-71, revised, perfected and extended.

In 1870 the Germans had founded at Nancy a gazette, written in French, through which General von Bonin, the "Governor-General of Lorraine," for his Prussian Majesty, issued his prescriptions, doctoral, inquisitorial, and especially requisitorial as far as Champagne.\*

In 1914-15 his successors founded at Charleville the *Gazette des Ardennes* (*Ardennes Gazette*), adding later an illustrated supplement, then an edition in English for the use of British and American soldiers.

Beyond the frontier they had *La Belgique*.

\* Memorandum from the Prussian Konrad Fischer, dated 4th November, 1914, to Baron von Gemmingen-Homburg, President (Prefect) of Lorraine at Metz.



## Foreword

In the Briey region, *La Gazette de Lorraine*, edited and printed in Metz.

Finally they were planning to establish two new papers at Nancy. "In the hope that the peace that follows the success of the German arms will give us possession of the French line of frontier fortresses, and that accordingly Nancy will also become a *German town*, I take the liberty of proposing myself at once as editor of a *German* and a *French* paper at Nancy, and I beg you to be so good as to give me your kind support.

"You cannot but be aware, Sir, that, as a result of my long experience as editor of the *Metzer-Zeitung*, I am in close touch with questions that concern Alsace-Lorraine, and I think I may say that the national policy I have pursued hitherto is in harmony with that of the government of the country.

"It is not necessary to lay any further stress on the great importance which once more attaches to the Press of Alsace-Lorraine, especially in the new provinces."\*

Nancy did not fall—even for an hour—into the hands of the enemy. But with what persistence the Germans controlled the Press "in the new provinces," is shown by the *Gazette des Ardennes*. We must thank our friend, Henri Domelier, for having produced authentic details about the "notorious newspaper," and, in particular, for having corrected the unintentionally erroneous report which had it that Prévost, the editor of the *Gazette*, had "had eighteen years' experience on the Eastern Press."†

Domelier's articles in the *Echo de Paris* excited the envy of twenty colleagues. There began an exhaustive inquiry by the whole Press into the *Gazette des Ardennes* and its supporters.

In this book will be found, co-ordinated and carefully arranged, the striking revelations of Domelier, both with regard to the effusions of the Boche spies and the incredible spectacle of the two Hohenzollerns, father and son, at Charleville.

Born in 1870 at Sedan, in the tragic surroundings of the disastrous battle, Henri Domelier, who had become editor of the *Dépêche des Ardennes*, devoted himself in this paper to questions of national defence. An energetic soul, a warm heart, a leader of men, our friend had founded the "Ardennes League of Patriots," to combat anti-militarist propaganda, and the *Petit Soldat des Ardennes*,

\* While Bismarck held sway at Versailles there was also a German paper, written in French, at first the *Nouvelliste*, and then the *Moniteur Officiel de Seine-et-Oise*.

† *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1st October, 1918.

## Foreword

addressed to all conscripts of the 2nd, 6th and 20th Army Corps (Amiens, Châlons, Nancy).

In August, 1914, after Charleroi, the Prefect of the Ardennes withdrew to Rethel. He was accompanied by the municipal authorities of Charleville, the majority of the members of Council and the various functionaries. The inhabitants, left to look after themselves, were fortunate enough to find several devoted men to form a municipal Commission. Domelier was chosen as secretary, and this organization, this *ad hoc* institution (which the Germans had to recognize when they occupied Charleville on the 29th August, 1914) was to administer the town until it was relieved in November, 1918. At the end of this long period Domelier received from his colleagues the testimonial which may fittingly be reproduced here :

“ Charleville

“ (Ardennes),

“ 9th January, 1919.

“ To the MAYOR OF CHARLEVILLE.

“ We, the undersigned members of the Municipal Commission of Charleville, the Relief Committee, and the Committee for Assisting Prisoners of War, certify that Henri Domelier has, throughout the war, shown the greatest devotion and the highest patriotism.

“ A member of the Municipal Commission from its formation, he zealously fulfilled the duties of secretary to the permanent delegation which sat every day, morning and evening, until the return of the old municipal authorities.

“ Although the disappearance of the paper which he edited had left him without resources, and although his new duties were entirely gratuitous, he indignantly rejected the repeated offers of Captain Schnitzer to join the editorial staff of the *Gazette des Ardennes* (represented at first as a paper entirely devoted to news), and we protest as strongly as possible against the infamous calumnies that represented him as taking a part, however small, in the editing of this ignoble paper.

“ Domelier's patriotism is above all suspicion. His colleagues often had to moderate it, and make him understand that it was necessary to bow to the inevitable and yield to the brutal force which knew no control.

“ He did all he could to avoid contact with the Germans, and his attitude involved him in repeated domiciliary visits and finally prison.

“ He never let slip an opportunity of setting an example of courage. Until the last day, even under the shells of the

## Foreword

bombardment of 10th November, he rendered the last honours to all our unfortunate soldiers, giving stirring addresses over their graves until these were forbidden.

"He took jealous care of the graves of our dead.

"He comforted the wounded, and the prisoners on their way through, and was one of the chief founders of the Committee of Relief, which towards the end was able to distribute food in the prisoners' camps that had been transferred to our town.

"We are happy to-day to be able to render just homage to him, and to express to him all the esteem and sympathy that his energetic and brave character and attitude have won for a man who, during these long hard years of trial, was never for a single instant unworthy of himself.

(Signed) "A. BLAIRON, *President*; PAUL GAILLY, *Vice-President*; ANDRÉ LEJAY, *Municipal Councillor*; LANGEOL, *Municipal Treasurer*; LEON JACOB, *Delegate*; A. GONTHIER, *Manager of the Comptoir National d'Escompte*; MADAME L. GRAFTIEAUX, *President of the Committee for helping Prisoners of War*; HÉCHEMANN, *Member of the Food Committee*; L. PILLOT, *District Agent for Relief at Charleville*."

What is there to add to these eulogies, so handsomely earned? The author of "Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters" would not wish me to say more than the bare minimum required to introduce him to the reader.

It is time to make room for Domelier's pages, so full of life and experience, on the occupation of Charleville. After their very considerable success in the *Echo de Paris* last November and December, they deserve to escape the ephemeral lot of a daily paper.

"Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters" will rank among the works of reference on the great agony, and, in their new form, the articles of our colleague from the Ardennes triumphantly bridge the decisive gulf that lies between journalism and history.

LÉON COULETTÉ,

*President of the Press Association of the East.*

1st March, 1919.

# CONTENTS

## PART I.—THE KAISER

| CHAP.                                                                        | PAGE |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| I.—A STRANGE GOVERNOR . . . . .                                              | 3    |
| II.—THE INSTALLATION OF G.H.Q. . . . .                                       | 11   |
| III.—THE ARRIVAL OF THE KAISER . . . . .                                     | 17   |
| IV.—THE ROYAL PALACE . . . . .                                               | 24   |
| V.—A ROYAL STROLLING PLAYER . . . . .                                        | 31   |
| VI.—WILLIAM II. AND THE FRENCH POPULATION . . . . .                          | 44   |
| VII.—THE KAISER'S DOCTOR AND "THE IMPERIAL POUF"<br>(DOCTOR WEZEL) . . . . . | 58   |

## PART II.—THE CROWN PRINCE

|                                           |     |
|-------------------------------------------|-----|
| VIII.—A DESK STRATEGIST . . . . .         | 71  |
| IX.—PRINCE OR CLOWN . . . . .             | 83  |
| X.—THE SON-IN-LAW OF M. BEURIER . . . . . | 102 |

## PART III

|                                                                                         |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| XI.—THE "GENERALSTAB" (THE GENERAL STAFF) . . . . .                                     | 117 |
| XII.—GENERAL HEADQUARTERS . . . . .                                                     | 127 |
| XIII.—THE SECRET FIELD POLICE (KAISER'S SAFETY AND<br>COUNTER-ESPIONAGE) . . . . .      | 142 |
| XIV.—THE FIGHT AGAINST PATRIOTISM . . . . .                                             | 156 |
| XV.—THE WAR CORRESPONDENTS OF THE GERMAN PRESS. . . . .                                 | 168 |
| XVI.—THE INFAMOUS "GAZETTE DES ARDENNES," AND<br>THE RENEGADE PRÉVOST . . . . .         | 177 |
| XVII.—THE POISON LABORATORY . . . . .                                                   | 195 |
| XVIII.—THE GAZETTE'S CAMPAIGNS . . . . .                                                | 213 |
| XIX.—THE GREAT OFFENSIVES (FOCH v. LUDENDORFF) . . . . .                                | 231 |
| XX.—THE END OF THE DRAMA . . . . .                                                      | 249 |
| XXI.—CONCLUSION.—THE MORAL OF THE FRENCH POPULA-<br>TION IN THE OCCUPIED AREA . . . . . | 261 |







PART I  
THE KAISER





# Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

## CHAPTER I

### A STRANGE GOVERNOR

The agony of the retreat.—Peaceful occupation.—The first looters.—“Don't play with firearms.”—“We are the masters.”—The passion for fishing.—Pipe smokers in spite of themselves.—Requisitioning love—ladies' lingerie—cheap rifles.—The Governor—an opera brigand.—The generosity of Hans Krammer.—A captain arrives.—Boche justice squared.

ON 25th August, 1914, the French army in the Charleville area had fallen back from the left bank of the Meuse on Rethel. Only a few detachments were still defending the approaches. On the 26th the guns were roaring to the east; the crackling of machine-guns rent the air, and that part of the population left in the towns of Charleville, Mézières and Mohon were anxiously wondering what would be the result of the great battle before Sedan.

On the following days the bombardment continued south and south-west, but its intensity decreased daily as a result of the retreat of our troops on Rheims. These were the only impressions felt by the inhabitants during these tragic days, for, apart from some slight skirmishing at Mézières on 28th August, there was no military event worthy of mention.

The German occupation was carried out smoothly. The Boche hordes marching on Paris had too much to do to indulge in any military parade which might impress the people. A

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

single battalion of Landsturm, commanded by a lieutenant-colonel, arrived at Mézières in the morning of 29th August and remained there one night. Patrols paraded the streets of the three towns; food and linen were requisitioned. By way of welcome the commanding officer had the following two placards posted :

### I

#### PROCLAMATION

“ Citizens :

“ A corps of the German army under my command has just occupied your town. As the war is being waged by the armies alone I formally guarantee the life and property of all inhabitants on the following conditions :

“ 1. That the inhabitants abstain strictly from any act of hostility against the German troops ;

“ 2. That food and forage for our men and horses be supplied by the inhabitants; all supplies will be paid for in ready money or by a voucher, payment for which is guaranteed at the end of the war ;

“ 3. That the inhabitants lodge our men to the best of their ability and keep their houses lit during the night ;

“ 4. That the inhabitants put the roads in good condition again ; remove all obstacles constructed for the enemy and do their best to assist our men in the accomplishment of their task, doubly difficult in an enemy country.

“ 5. It is forbidden to collect in the street, to ring bells, or to communicate in any way with the enemy.

“ 6. All arms in the possession of inhabitants must be handed over at the town hall within two hours ;

“ 7. The Mayor, the parish priest and four leading men of the town are to report themselves to me immediately and serve as hostages while the troops remain in the town.

“ On these conditions I repeat : life and private property of inhabitants will be absolutely guaranteed. The severe discipline to which our troops are accustomed makes it possible that no inhabitant need be forced to neglect his business or leave his home. On the other hand, I shall immediately

## A Strange Governor

resort to severe measures if the above conditions are not fulfilled. In this respect I shall deal in the first place with the hostages. Further, any inhabitant caught with arms or convicted of any act of hostility against our troops will be shot. Finally, the whole town is responsible for the acts of each of its inhabitants and for any annoyances resulting from co-operation with the enemy."

### II

"The officer commanding the German troops calls the attention of the public to the following:

"All persons not soldiers and not recognizable as soldiers by external signs (uniform) firing on German soldiers or committing other hostile acts against the German troops will be summarily put to death.

"Whoever destroys or damages railways, telegraph wires or other means of communication will be immediately shot.

"I proclaim that in case of any attack on a German soldier or of damage to communications the community on whose territory the said act is committed will be always held responsible. The village will be set on fire and all male inhabitants capable of bearing arms arrested.

"As regards return for food for men and horses it is proclaimed that a receipt will always be given for the amount supplied."

The next day the battalion resumed its march "*nach Paris*."

For about ten days the only signs of the occupation were the numerous motor cars and requisitioning lorries which entered Charleville and formed a vast park of vehicles on the Place Ducale.

With rare exceptions the requisitioning and commandeering officers used to arrive at the town hall with an armed escort of several men. Two of these accompanied them with loaded rifles and fixed bayonets and mounted guard at the door of the office of the Municipal Commission while the officer, revolver in hand, entered without knocking. Some of them



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

even, by way of opening business, would point their revolvers at the people present.

For the most part they introduced themselves with unnecessary arrogance: "Monsieur le Maire," they would say, "we must have—"; or else: "I wish it, it is war." When they felt any resistance they added pitilessly: "We must have it, and at once. We are the masters. You are the conquered and we are the conquerors; obey! Everything here is ours, and we require without delay" (pointing out the object required) "to enter Paris! . . ."

Without interruption luxurious motor cars and heavily-laden motor lorries disgorged their insolent occupants. They came from everywhere. The first thing they all asked was the address of the wine and spirit merchants, on whom they made formidable levies, taking the best brands of Bordeaux, Burgundy and Champagne as well as famous brandies by hogsheads and half hogsheads. There was such an orgy that as soon as Boche G.H.Q. was installed they had to put a stop to this requisitioning. There would not have been a bottle left for themselves.

To this requisitioning of wine and food, which was before everything else their first concern, other items were added which had nothing to do with the needs of the army. Some requisitioned bottles of scent, luxurious soaps, fine linen, clothing, furs. Others had the assurance to consider watches, precious stones, or other articles of jewellery as requisitionable. Their meals, taken in the existing restaurants, were paid for by voucher. One disciple of St. Peter thus provided himself with a whole fisherman's outfit, which he paid for with a worthless piece of paper. A captain, timid but a great smoker, did not dare to requisition for his personal account a briar pipe which tempted him.

His scruples did not last; he had a brilliant idea. As he could not requisition it for himself personally he would put down to his company's account; so that the shop had to supply three hundred pipes owing to Monsieur le capitaine's timidity.

Their post-prandial pleasures were also the object of much requisitioning. Even a certain *maison close*, which was later



## A Strange Governor

to play a part in the history of Germany and influence the destinies of the Hohenzollern dynasty, was the victim of this system. This temple of Venus was the rendezvous of the officers when the heady wines of France had put them in a gay mood. Modest as the tariff was they thought it too high, and the majority decided to get out of payment.

This is how they went about it. At first they conformed with the rule of the house, which was to pay in advance. They even showed themselves gallant and generous. But at the moment of departure the scene changed. The brute reappeared. They drew their revolvers and on pain of death forced the victim or the proprietor of the establishment to return the cost of the entertainment as well as the tip and to receive in exchange a voucher.

A good number of these looters took advantage of their dupes' ignorance of the German language. They wrote in German and signed fantastic vouchers: sometimes an obscene expression, sometimes as follows: "Payable by Poincaré, King Albert, or King George of England, when the French are smashed and the Germans are in Paris and London. . . ."

The town of Charleville was the special hunting ground of the Sedan garrison, and the requisitioners were not content with looting in the shops what was more or less useful for the needs of the army: feminine garments, delicate cambrics, intimate lingerie destined to be the reward of favours of which they were the recipients, the most costly articles of toilet, were also considered requisitionable, and they did not deny themselves.

The Nimrods, on their side, insisted on ministering to their favourite pleasure at a low cost. They attained their object by ordering the inhabitants to deposit in a special depot all the arms in their possession. It only remained to choose from among these expensive hammerless guns and selected Lefauchaux the most modern and perfect sporting guns. Browning and regulation revolvers went the same way, and as this form of looting was said to be temporary, no voucher was given. Finally, when the looters had chosen the best weapons they had the rest thrown into the Meuse to remove the traces of their theft.

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

It will be objected that the inhabitants ought to have refused to obey orders not emanating directly from the official German authorities. It is easy to criticize when danger is viewed from a distance. Some shopkeepers, insisting on their rights, resisted, and in a few rare instances won their case. But the majority of the inhabitants were terrorized by the threats, and a revolver pointed at a poor, defenceless woman soon got the better of her inclination to resist. The subalterns were particularly addicted to this method of intimidation, and the soldiers were not slow to follow the lead of their officers to attain their ends. Among them was a man called Hans Krammer, "first governor of Charleville," whose adventures deserve to be related.

The Charleville Red Cross had been authorized by the Germans to receive in their hospitals a certain number of the wounded from the battle-fields of Fosse-à-l'Eau, Tain-le-Moutier and Boulzicourt. One of its delegates, M. Lemoine, municipal councillor of Mézières, accompanied by some devoted citizens, had gone to these localities to fetch our unfortunate men.

At Clavy-Warby on the 2nd September, 1914, M. Lemoine asked to speak with the local commanding officer and presented himself at the address which had been given him. He rang the bell, a window was opened, and a ruffianly-looking soldier inquired in German what he wanted. He did not know a single word of French and M. Lemoine was completely ignorant of the language of Goethe and Schiller. By dint of gestures they managed to understand one another. The French Red Cross delegate explained the object of his mission and expressed the desire to speak with this famous commanding officer he wished to meet. M. Lemoine took the trooper for an orderly and asked him to take him before his officer or to ask the latter to come and meet him at the town hall. He had scarcely arrived there when the soldier in question, dirty as a pig, with greasy face and shaggy beard, dressed in sordid and repulsive fustian, entered behind and levelled his rifle at him.

The delegate pulled down the weapon and repeated to the dirty Boche—literally as well as figuratively, for he looked like

## A Strange Governor

a brigand—that he wished to speak to the commanding officer.

"*Ich bin der Kommandant* (I am the commanding officer)," he replied.

The commanding officer, or he who claimed the title of commanding officer of Clavy, was an individual without warrant or authority, a deserter from his regiment and a robber of the dead. It was Hans Krammer, who had found it quite natural to remain with the French wounded rather than follow the fighting armies; the post was less dangerous.

The representative of the Red Cross presented his letters of credit; the Boche accompanied him to our men and made arrangements for their transport.

Hans Krammer accompanied the first convoy. Mounted on a superb horse which he had stolen in the course of his thieving expeditions, his rifle flung across his shoulder, bayonet and revolver at his side, an officer's sword strapped to his saddle, he looked the typical classical brigand one wouldn't care to meet at a turning in a wood.

Immediately on the arrival of the wounded at Charleville, where they had been taken to the civil hospital, M. Lemoine introduced Hans Krammer to the municipal council. The fellow then took the opportunity to arrange for a comfortable position for himself. Calmly, with no authority, he declared that he had installed himself at the hospital of the girls' high school, where he commandeered the services of the Professor of German as interpreter. He then announced his intention of taking control of the hospitals of Charleville. He added that if he was satisfied with the way he was treated, he would place the town under his protection, would guarantee its safety and would take steps to see that it was not bombarded, burned or pillaged. Now the German army was more than a hundred kilometres in front. It will perhaps cause surprise that such an individual could talk like this without being immediately thrown out; but the threatening proclamations regarding the security of the German soldiers were such as to inspire fear of the dangerous consequences that might follow too hasty action. On the contrary, the matron of the hospital was recommended to take care of a soldier who presented



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

himself as governor of the town of which he comprised the entire garrison. It was only too obvious with what sort of scoundrel the inhabitants had to deal, but in the absence of any German authority qualified to interfere with his movements it was found necessary to await a more favourable moment. Krammer took advantage of his privileged position to carry on his looting whenever he could. He went into the surrounding country and lifted horses, cattle, carriages, metal, etc., which he sold to a receiver of stolen property. Every day he brought back to the hospital where he had chosen his quarters heaps of provisions and numerous baskets of wines and spirits.

Growing more modern in his ideas he no longer found the horse a satisfactory mount. He took over for his personal use a bicycle and a two-seater car, pillaged the garages and distributed bicycles to all the thieves he met. He was anxious to assure himself of the sympathy of the dregs of the population by this generosity which cost him little.

He might have carried on his impositions for some time longer if a requisitioning officer of the lines of communication inspection of the third army had not happened to be in the town hall of Charleville at the moment when the governor was crossing the Place Ducale in his little car. The fellow was pointed out to him. The captain gave orders for him to be seized and taken to the military prison at Sedan. However, the explanations with which he furnished the Boche court of justice must have been satisfactory, for one evening Hans Krammer, set at liberty, appeared at the Charleville *commissariat of police* to announce his acquittal. He had in the meantime on his way managed to steal a horse and trap in the village of Ayvelles.

He left the next day ; since then no one knows what became of him. Perhaps he carried on his nefarious career in other countries ? In any case we feel certain that he didn't meet a hero's death. Nothing but the bullets of a firing party could put an end to his exploits.

## CHAPTER II

### THE INSTALLATION OF G.H.Q.

The Boche pioneers.—“*Gloria*,” “*Gloria*.”—Speeding up repairs.—The art of using railways.—Edelweiss and stags-heads.—“*Nach Paris und Nach London*.”—Mohon and Meaux, a geographical error.—The days pass. . . .—“*Ave Cesar*.”—Trainloads of corpses.—Quartermasters arrive.—Connoisseurs of pears but enemies of placards.—A badly kept secret.—The Spartans from beyond the Rhine.—Quarters built for “him.”—*Kaiserliches Palast*.

UNTIL 12th September, 1914, the excitement felt by the population was of a modest degree. The passage of troops hurrying towards the Marne had avoided the three towns shut in by the numerous windings of the Meuse, whose bridges, blown up by the French sappers, had not been repaired. On that day, however, the German occupation became a reality.

A company of Boche pioneers arrived and took up their quarters at the artillery barracks. Their mission was to reconstruct the bridges that had been destroyed and to clear the railway tunnel which had been blocked by French mines. Civilian labour was conscripted to cut down the magnificent pines of a wood near the town of Vivier-Guyon and to furnish the props and piles necessary for the repairs.

The arrival of the spiked helmets made a deep impression. The night was dark. Suddenly the heavy, measured tread of heavy boots on the paving of the street was heard; then a whistle. Then two hundred throats sang to the rhythmic beat of the march, in a strange, guttural language, a hymn whose refrain invariably ended with “*Gloria*,” “*Gloria*.”

When they were not shouting their “*Gloria*” they were singing “*Die Wacht am Rhein*,” or else whistling in chorus.

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

These bridges were to be made ready for use by 25th September, and the railway line laid ready for the 26th. On the 19th the first piles were driven in the arm of the Meuse separating Mézières from Charleville, and on 23rd September the flags of Imperial Germany and Bavaria, wreaths of foliage and garlands of flowers, told the public that the temporary bridges were open to the Imperial officers and troops as well as the inhabitants. The first car had crossed. The railway bridges carrying the lines going east were also ready on the same date, and a deviating line passed round the tunnel, the clearing of which took much longer, as the percolation of water destroyed almost daily the work that had been done. This work was urgent. The enemy needed our railways to throw his troops into the battles of the Aisne and the Yser.

These lines were an invaluable asset to the Germans for their military operations. Alas ! how many trains made the journey to Metz, Verdun, Rheims and Hirson during the four tragic years of the great war !

In this way we were made aware of the preparations for the great offensives against Russia, Rumania and Italy, or at the threatened points of the Western Front. For months at a time train followed train without interruption every quarter of an hour, and sometimes less, putting the agony of fear into our hearts and proving to us the enemy's great knowledge of the use of railways and the perfect organization of his military transport.

After this terrible war, which has turned out so badly for them, the soldiers of the ex-Kaiser ought to know something of this rapid mode of locomotion, for they have travelled backwards and forwards over all the railways of Europe, starting from the French front to fight in the Balkans, leaving the Balkans for the Tyrol after a *détour* through Rumania, and returning to the Ardennes after crossing Poland or the Bukowina, to reoccupy their trenches before Verdun, in Champagne or in Picardy.

It was easy to tell in what campaigns these migratory soldiers had taken part. If they had fought in Italy they wore in their helmets a metal crest of Edelweiss ; if against the Russians



## The Installation of G.H.Q.

a leaden medal bearing the effigy of William or Francis Joseph ; for Transylvania, a stag's head.

As the war dragged on, however, the railway convoys gave a key to the state of mind of the combatants. At the beginning the passing trains were decorated with German flags and foliage. The carriages were scribbled over with inscriptions : *Nach Paris und London*, or with filthy abuse of France and England and coarse caricatures of French and English soldiers, almost always hanging from a gallows. They were, moreover, so certain of victory, and at the same time so ignorant of their whereabouts, that on arrival at Charleville they thought they were a few kilometres from Paris, for they confused Mohon with Meaux. Don't let it be supposed that we are alluding to the ignorance of a few private soldiers ; even the officers thought they were quite near to the capital, and did not succeed in hiding their chagrin when they realized that they were 250 kilometres away.

In the early days the trains used to emit ear-splitting shrieks and deafening hurrahs ! but the high spirits of the Boche gradually died down as the war was prolonged and the trains, no longer bearing bellicose inscriptions, passed through in silence. The men, silent, stared fixedly into space, their eyes turned towards this little town, the residence of their Emperor. Seeing them pass, one could not help thinking of the *Ave Cesar, morituri te salutant* of the Roman gladiators. The first successes of their various offensives raised their spirits a little, but when they came to realize that their great efforts and gigantic sacrifices had brought no result, these proud " field greys " relapsed into sullen mutiny.

The colossal losses that they suffered were known to the French public, who could estimate them from the numerous Red Cross trains disgorging their wounded into the twelve hospitals of Mézières and Charleville and the train loads of corpses coming down from the north towards Germany, especially at the time of the Yser battles.

Several of these halted for several hours at night outside the stations of Charleville and Mohon, giving off a pestilential and very characteristic stench.

While the railway pioneers were being billeted in Charle-

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

ville a captain of the lines of communication service also arrived and established a Lines of Communication Headquarters to safeguard the relations between the French administration left in the occupied country and the German military authority.

Four days later, 16th September, 1914, a group of fifteen Staff officers, under Major Von Kessler of the Imperial household, arrived in luxurious cars bearing the royal arms and presented themselves at the town hall at Charleville. Major Von Kessler informed the municipal commission that he had arrived to prepare quarters for an important Headquarters, which he did not mention by name, consisting of about 350 officers of all ranks, and 1,300 N.C.O.'s, soldiers, secretaries, chauffeurs, orderlies.

These officers demanded sumptuous villas for the noble and exalted personages who were to be at the head of this Headquarters, and comfortable houses for the other officers.

This group of officers had already made an inspection of the market and looted the baskets of the fruit-women to stuff their pockets with succulent pears.

The chief of the mission explained the object of his visit, while his companions ate in his presence, and in front of the municipal authorities, the tasty fruits which they had found and which they hid behind their backs immediately after each bite like schoolboys doing wrong.

One thing, however, had attracted their attention and some of them had shown their disapproval. In the corridors of the town hall they had caught sight of the mobilization placards and some maps of the war zone. Such a sight could not be borne by the officers of his Boche Majesty's entourage, and the notices were ruthlessly torn to pieces. The rankling of the unexpected defeat of the Marne had not yet been assuaged.

They left Charleville the same day to return to Luxembourg, where the Kaiser was, leaving behind five officers under Rittmeister von Rochew, who was to prepare the quarters for the celebrated *Grosses Hauptquartier* of the King of Prussia and the famous General Staff, which, for more than three years,

## The Installation of G.H.Q.

was to make the little town in the Ardennes the residence of the sinister Kaiser and the capital of the Central Powers.

The first task of these five officers was to establish a *Kommandantur* of G.H.Q., independent of that of L. of C., and controlling relations between the French authorities and Imperial Headquarters.

Although the secret was jealously guarded by the Germans who had already arrived, the rumour rapidly spread that the Emperor of Germany was soon to take up his residence in Charleville; but this sensational news caused no excitement, no curiosity.

The Boches were disregarded by everybody, their presence was odious and no one took any interest in their movements.

Scarcely had the Kaiser's quartermasters arrived when, in certain quarters, everything was turned upside down. The apartments were loaded with valuable furniture; pianos, billiard tables, costly tapestries were requisitioned at the furnishers' shops, whose stocks were reduced to a minimum, or "borrowed" from private people.,

Requisitioning is, on occasion, an elegant euphemism to mask sheer robbery. The furniture, once borrowed, was sent to Germany on the departure of the occupant, after which the apartments were refurnished and cleared again in the same way.

The Boche officers insisted on the most perfect and most modern comforts: central heating, bathroom, water, gas and electricity on every floor; otherwise the municipality was called on to install these things at the expense of the rates.

Again the simple tastes of the General Staff were not of course content with water from the town supply: the best wines of France alone were worthy of their attention, and before the arrival of Boche G.H.Q. serious levies had been made on private cellars and the choicest vintages put at their disposal.

Major Von Kessler, during his visit to the town hall, had explained that this *grand quartier*, i.e., the Kaiser's immediate suite, was to be grouped together. He consulted the plan of the town, selected a district and immediately proceeded there to inspect the site and the surroundings. His choice had fallen on the quartier de la Gare at Charleville for the



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

Emperor's quarters and on the Préfecture of the Ardennes for the General Staff, with the old private mansions of the Place Bayard as annexes.

The Place de la Gare and its surroundings were admirably suited for this purpose. They might have been specially constructed and arranged to receive a sovereign and the numerous officers and officials attached to his person.

The Imperial palace (*Kaiserliches Palast*) and its annexes were bounded by the Place de la Gare, the Avenue de la Gare, the Cours d'Orléans and the Avenue de Mézières, new and comfortable quarters, especially the Place and Avenue de la Gare, where superb houses had been built and pleasant gardens laid out for the wealthy merchants of the district. It formed a vast quadrilateral in the form of an irregular trapeze, the top, about 300 yards long, faced east towards the station, and the base, of 400 yards, followed the Cours d'Orléans; the north side, 250 yards, followed the whole length of the Avenue de la Gare, and the south, 320 yards, the Avenue de Mézières.

On the base to the east of the Place de la Gare, lined by a row of handsome houses, stood, a little further back than the rest, a beautiful detached villa with garage, stables and out-buildings, and a pretty pleasure garden. It was the residence of M. Georges Corneau, proprietor and editor of the *Petit Ardennais*, a dwelling worthy to receive the unwelcome guest, in which were concentrated for nearly two years his hopes and anxieties and perhaps, too, his remorse at having let loose upon the world, and especially on our land of France, the horrible scourge of war.

Together with the *Kommandantur* of G.H.Q. there arrived the Kaiser's major-domo, Herr Lampeh, an ex-furnisher, to undertake the furnishing of his master's apartments.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ARRIVAL OF THE KAISER

The arrangements.—A public square turned into an imperial promenade.—Installation of the General Staff.—The PTT Boches.—A confused exchange.—To compete with the Eiffel tower.—The Emperor is protected—anti-aircraft defence.—The undesirables.—The *Staatswache*.—Arrival of the "*scrap of paper man*."—The crowned fool follows him.—Charleville a seaport.—"Look out for the bomb!"—A barbarian's respect for private property.—Bethmann prefers Charleville to Potsdam.—The bustle of a great town.—Well-informed reporters.

EVERY day saw new innovations at the Villa Corneau and the neighbouring houses. Engineer officers drew up plans; sappers carried out the work of pulling down and rebuilding. The villa, which was to serve as the royal residence, was next to the noble building of the Claude Lafontaine Bank (Prévost and Co.), which overlooked the Cours d'Orléans, and whose magnificent park adjoined the Corneau property. The Ministry of War was to be installed there, together with the offices of the Imperial Chancellery. In the Avenue de la Gare was the private residence of M. Edouard Prévost, the General Manager of the bank, and here the "*scrap of paper man*," Bethmann-Hollweg, Chancellor of the German Empire, was to be accommodated. It had to be made possible for these accomplices of William II. to answer at once to their master's summons. For this reason doors were pierced in the separating walls, to make the three buildings communicate directly one with another. In front, the Square de la Gare, on which before the war, military bands gave weekly concerts, and to which the shady trees lent a particular charm, completed the pleasant scene. It was also possible to shut this off with a



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

barrier, and so protect his Boche Majesty against possible attack.

Another advantage of the residence chosen for the Kaiser was its immediate proximity to the fairly important hotel, L'Hôtel du Nord, the kitchens of which could be used to supply the royal table, and the spacious dining-rooms as reception and banqueting halls. Further, the numerous guest-rooms could be made good use of.

The General Staff had taken over as offices the Préfecture des Ardennes, at Mézières, which was also the headquarters of the 4th Infantry Division and the 24th Brigade. The building was large enough to provide quarters for the Chief of the General Staff and all the departments under his orders. The Quartermaster-General and Officers of the General Staff lived in the old mansions on the Place Bayard, which, after serving the tutors of the King of France and the professors of practical engineering, were now to shelter the invader.

The Hôtel des Postes was at once put in order again. Crowds of field telegraphists repaired the lines, or fixed new ones, so that Mézières and Charleville were soon caught in a dense spider's web of copper wire, connecting the Emperor and his Chief of the General Staff with every part of the French and Russian fronts, as well as with Berlin, Budapest, Constantinople and Sofia.

The field post service of G.H.Q. would have liked to reopen the Charleville post office, and especially the central telegraph office, with which that of Mézières was connected, but the central office had been rendered unserviceable so successfully that it was found impossible to re-establish it. The Boche post and telegraph service was therefore obliged to content itself with the Mézières system alone. It was not until later, after the Crown Prince had taken up his residence at the Château de Belair and the General Staff of his army group were quartered in the house of Madame Gustave Gailly, widow of the former senator of the Ardennes—which had previously served as the Headquarters of the Naval Ministry and General Staff—that the Charleville office was restored to its old position. A wireless installation of eleven receivers, several of which were seventy metres high, was erected on the Berteaucourt

## The Arrival of the Kaiser

plateau, which was once the drill ground of the French garrison, and employed ninety-eight operators.

Finally steps were taken to protect the precious life of this august personage. The cellars of the villa which he was to live in were reinforced with concrete ; the walls were thickly panelled with oak and distempered above, as were also the staircases, and an exit was made on to the garden on the east side of the house. A machine-gun post connected by telephone with G.H.Q. was placed on the roof of the station, and mortars, batteries of artillery, anti-aircraft guns mounted on cars, kept a look-out for French aircraft on all sides of the three towns, on the north side of the Plateau de Berteaucourt, at a place called Boisenval, at Moulin-à-Vent, at Etien, at Montcy-Notre-Dame, at Mont Olympe, at Aiglemont. The anti-aircraft cars were posted at Saint-Julien, a suburb of Mézières, and at the entrance to the village of Saint-Laurent.

To complete the Imperial protection, the *Geheime Feld Polizei* (Secret Military Police) preceded G.H.Q. After that there was no further doubt as to the rank of the expected visitor, for a crowd of elegant gentlemen in clothes of French cut, "made in Germany," with the inevitable green slouch hat decked with the legendary grouse feather, poured into the streets. From the way in which they stared at the passers-by it was impossible to mistake them : these noble gentlemen were Inspectors of the General Security of Headquarters, to which we shall devote a special chapter. During nearly four years the unfortunate French in the occupied area were to become well acquainted with the scourge of the G.F.P. and its persecutions : perquisitions, fines, prison, deportation and even capital punishment. The Bavarian Major Bauer, formerly Chief of Police at Strasbourg, was at its head. He has left behind him in the Ardennes an execrable memory.

At the same time an army of servants in liveries of every colour took possession of the Imperial apartments, and tall and well-built soldiers, tightly laced into their well-cut uniforms, with a high collar adorned with nickel, in the blue enamelled centre of which, in gold characters, was the Gothic letter "W," surmounted by a crown, were quartered in the artillery barracks du Sépulcre, for the cavalry, and the Chanzy Lycée

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

for the infantry and artillery. The right wing of the latter had been turned into a hospital, a faithful application of the Geneva Convention. This was the *Staatswache* (Royal Bodyguard), whose duty it was to watch over the life of the Emperor of the Barbarians. The sentries mounted guard at the Imperial Palace, and night and day patrolled their beats in the Square de la Gare and the neighbouring gardens. His Majesty was well guarded, and might come to France in perfect safety. The bridges had been reconstructed; the trains were running regularly and expresses connected Charleville with Berlin direct. On the 26th September, 1914, in the evening, M. Bethmann-Hollweg, Imperial Chancellor, discreetly took up his residence at M. Edouard Prévost's house, followed by M. von Jagow, Foreign Minister, who was quartered in the same house. Grand Admiral von Tirpitz, inventor of submarine warfare, and one of the authors of the Boche defeat, took up his quarters at the Admiralty Office (the house of Senator G. Gailly), and there prepared his genial plans for the crushing of perfidious Albion. Ministers and generals were at their post. "Our Kaiser" was expected.

In the evening of the 28th, at eleven o'clock, he arrived in a car, as modestly as his Chancellor, without pomp and without ceremony. His discretion was such that, contrary to custom, the bells were not rung. For several days his presence was even denied by the police and the Headquarters. They couldn't be too careful.

Charleville became the capital of the Central Powers. The modest Ardennes city had the misfortune to contain the most eminent officials of the Empire. The Wilhelmstrasse had been transferred to the Avenue de la Gare, and the Villa Corneau took the place of the Potsdam palace. It might almost be said that the pretty little town, washed by the picturesque river Meuse, had become a sea-port, for Prince Henry of Prussia, brother of William II., brother-in-law of the Czar, and Admirals von Tirpitz, von Scheer and von Cassel, the chiefs of the German fleet, had brought in their train a whole host of naval officers, submarine captains and sailors.

Von Tirpitz was a wild sea-dog, who feared nothing, not even bombs. Therefore, when shortly after his arrival a



## The Arrival of the Kaiser

parcel carefully tied with string, and of cylindrical shape, was found in the cupboard of a servant's room, it caused well-justified alarm. There could be no doubt that it was a bomb, placed there by the French to blow up the Admiralty.

The police were immediately informed. A thorough search was made, and, taking every possible precaution, the artillery were sent to remove the deadly machine. It was examined from every point of view, and an artificer, braver than his companions, screwed up his courage to cut the string and remove the paper. What amazement when the French bomb proved to be . . . an ordinary alarm clock ?

Von Tirpitz was always very correct, with a fine presence and a magnificent beard ; he liked to display his imposing person in the streets of Charleville. He would not allow his residence on French soil to be pillaged. A medallion of the Senator and Mme. Gustave Gailly, from the chisel of their son-in-law, the celebrated sculptor Alphonse Colle, attracted his attention. He had it photographed and sent a copy to their nephew, M. Paul Gailly, Vice-President of the Municipal Commission of Charleville, with the following inscription, in the Admiral's own hand-writing : " How the Barbarians take works of art." The whole signed " Von Tirpitz." Since then, however, the Crown Prince's Staff did these things better ; of the whole sumptuous dwelling there remains nothing but the four walls. The furniture was taken out and sent to Germany.

Bethmann-Hollweg worked much and very late into the night. His tall, slight figure gave him a different bearing from that of his thick-set and massive compatriots. He hardly ever went out except to visit the Emperor, to go to the Temple, or to take a walk in a little garden on the hill of Montcy-Saint-Pierre, where he had a view of the whole town and the course of the Meuse. He found the country charming and preferred it to Potsdam. He chatted quite familiarly with those he met in the garden, and even performed certain favours for some of them, by facilitating their correspondence with their relations in France, in spite of the fact that this was strictly forbidden by the police. This system of deception conceived by the Imperial Chancellor lasted about a year.

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

His son-in-law, Count Zech, who had passed his whole life in embassies and had spent a long time in Paris, was less Boche in mentality than his fellow-countrymen. France had left her mark on him ; but, in spite of this veneer, he was thoroughly German at heart.

Our compatriots will doubtless wonder why the Kaiser took with him in the field so many administrative departments, whose presence would have been more useful in Berlin. The answer is very simple.

The German Government, deceived by the General Staff, was convinced, in spite of the recent defeat on the Marne, that a decisive victory for Germany over the Entente was certain and imminent. That is why Bethmann and Von Jagow had accompanied their Sovereign, in order to be ready to take part at Bordeaux—for the haughty William had fixed on Bordeaux as the scene of the conference—in the peace preliminaries as soon as circumstances permitted.

On arriving at his residence the Kaiser made a tour of the property. He found the house well arranged, very comfortable and furnished with taste. In his capacity of infallible art critic, however, he made some remarks about the pictures. His Omniscient Majesty found the pictures too big for the size of the house. No change was made in the arrangement of the rooms, except in the case of his own bedroom, which had been furnished by his major-domo, the ex-furnisher Lampeh, and had been the bedroom of Monsieur Georges Corneau. A white wall-paper, bordered with garlands of flowers and inscriptions : "*Deutschland über Alles !*" covered the walls. His iron bed, enamelled white—in imitation of Napoleon—which followed him wherever he moved his quarters for any length of time, replaced that of the previous occupant.

This little corner of the Ardennes then became the centre of a bustle which its peaceful inhabitants had never imagined, and which they could very well have done without. The principal streets, along which motors passed ceaselessly to and fro, had the appearance of important boulevards. Side by side with the French population swarmed a vast crowd of officers, soldiers, and officials of every rank and every branch of the service, foreign attachés, war correspondents, whose



## The Arrival of the Kaiser

copy was furnished by the Press Bureau, which controlled them. These last were quartered by the General Staff in the Villa Renaudin, William's future residence after his hurried removal from Corneau's house, and later that of the Crown Prince. Military attachés were relegated to a neighbouring château more than three kilometres from the seat of the General Staff.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ROYAL PALACE

Sovereign and vassals.—An imposing Austrian.—The capitulation of the Bulgarian.—The kinglets round Augustus.—The anger of Cæsar.—An Archduke asks for help.—In Germany's service, Austria is not rich.—Royal carriages and the Imperial train.—Grandeur and decadence.—The statesmen appear.—Visit of Mr. Gerard, the American Ambassador.—The *Sachsenvilla*.—The Chancellor likes toys.—Supplies from America.—The slaves of the North.—An historic interview.—Like Quintus Fabius.—Catholic prelates and a Protestant king.—An independent bishop.—Cardinal Hartmann begs for war funds.—The courage of a French archpresbyter.—Boche delicacy.—Final looting.

THE countless wheels of the German High Command, the General Staff, the Headquarters of the King of Prussia, began to revolve smoothly from the 28th September, 1914.

The Confederate States had sent delegates to G.H.Q. to represent their petty kings, grand dukes and princes of innumerable parts of the Empire, faithful servants of the master of Potsdam. The Allied Powers of Central Europe on their side had detailed general officers to transmit the orders of the Villa Corneau and the Préfecture to the Austrian, Turkish and Bulgarian vassals of the new Scourge of God. William's humble second, the unfortunate Francis Joseph, had appointed Field-Marshal Count de Sturgh and Lieutenant-Colonel Baron von Bienerth; the Sick Man of Turkey, Zekki Pacha, and Ferdinand of Bulgaria the criminal Colonel Gantcheff. Field-Marshal von Sturgh was a huge giant, repulsively fat, with the bearing of a hippopotamus. Too obese to mount a horse, he always went about in a royal car. Now and again he risked a short walk, and this mass of flesh moving with difficulty sweated and groaned piteously. He spent his time feasting.

## The Royal Palace

He was always to be found eating. He took no exercise, and all his movements had to be assisted by his faithful orderlies. Von Sturgh had put up at the Hôtel Terminus. What amusing things the witnesses could have told about him !

Baron von Bienerth showed up better. In his well-cut uniform his smart, supple figure made a better impression than his "*Kamerad*" of the German army. He was nevertheless a bitter enemy of France. He took no trouble to conceal his pleasure at her defeats, but changed his tune when the German papers had to admit the indisputable successes of Brussiloff, or the capture of Gorizia. Then he walked about with hanging head and frowning face.

Zekki Pacha was a gay dog. He had a great weakness for petticoats, and renewed acquaintance with the memories and distractions of his harem in the low cabarets of the town. An old woman was charged with the duty of ministering to his fancies. He preferred the pleasures of the City of Charles de Gonzague—himself in his time a frequenter of ill-famed houses—to the dangers of the front. He never went to the front except with the Kaiser, and even then he frequently found some excuse for shirking this disagreeable duty.

When Bulgaria joined the Central Powers, Staff Colonel Gantcheff arrived at Charleville. Having been educated partly in France, he spoke French admirably. He posed as a friend of our country, had little to do with the German officers and was quite generous to the Frenchmen who were attached to his person. At the end of the war he was Commander-in-Chief on the Salonika Front, and one of the signatories of the Bulgarian capitulation.

After September, Charleville became the rendezvous of all the princes and statesmen of the Quadruple Alliance. The Kings of Bavaria, Saxony and Würtemberg, the Prince of Baden, the Grand Dukes of Hesse and Mecklenburg, German princelets, the Crown Prince and Generals obediently reported themselves there and bore themselves with military stiffness when Cæsar frowned, or addressed them on the lack of eagerness shown by their soldiers to have themselves killed for the King of Prussia.

There were some pretty lively altercations between William

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

and the Heads of the Confederate States, which reached the ears of the French public. On these occasions the Kaiser showed himself particularly violent, and the report of a scene with the King of Saxony on the 18th January, 1915, in the course of which the Father of the Crown Prince threw an inkstand at the former husband of La Toselli and broke a mirror, reached the offices of the French Press.

A special mansion in the Rue Forest was set apart for illustrious visitors. The Maison Perin acquired a notoriety which its owners certainly did not desire. The handsome little *hôtel* had been turned into a palace of kings. In addition to the German royalty summoned to the Imperial Headquarters at the whim of their Imperial Master, the princes of the Allied States also came to do homage.

The King of Saxony lived there on several occasions. Every morning before going to see the Emperor he attended mass at the French church, and during each visit he took the sacrament at least once. He used to walk alone in the town, without an escort. The Duke of Brunswick, the Kaiser's son-in-law, and the Prince of Schleswig-Holstein, his brother-in-law, slept there in turn.

The Heir to the Austrian throne, who was to succeed Francis Joseph as Charles I., was also a guest of the Palais des Souverains.

He came to Charleville at a critical time. The Russian advance was causing anxiety, and the armies of Francis Joseph needed strong help to avoid a catastrophe. Archduke Charles came to ask for this sorely needed help. He remained two days at Charleville, walking the streets in his brilliant hussar uniform, faced with gold. His red trousers attracted great attention. He made rather a pleasing impression. Charles was accompanied by Baron Burian, Financial Minister, who conferred with Bethmann-Hollweg and implored Germany's assistance to restore Austria's shaky financial position.

On the 1st March, 1916, Boris of Bulgaria came to salute the Emperor in the name of his father, the Czar of the Bulgarians. Both he and his brother Cyril paid several visits to Charleville. Boris went with the Kaiser to the Verdun front at the opening of the Crown Prince's great offensive.



## The Royal Palace

The Turkish Heir Apparent also visited Charleville, a few days before his mysterious suicide. His visit did not attract attention.

These princely personages came to G.H.Q. in their private trains to pay their respects to their Sovereign.

We were able to see the carriages of the Archduke Charles and the Bulgarian prince. That of the former was a creamy white picked out with gold. The train of the Bulgarian Prince was royal blue, edged with a gold line, with the arms of Bulgaria and the Coburgs on the doors. The Turkish heir arrived in a special train belonging to the Compagnie des Wagons-Lits, and consisting of dining-parlour and sleeping cars.

The German Imperial train was often shunted on to a special siding kept for this purpose. The coach-work of the carriages was bottle-green, decorated very simply. The train consisted of a sleeping-car, a study and drawing-room, a dining-car and a kitchen. To these four coaches specially reserved for the Kaiser were attached a first-class coach for the officers and a second-class for the *personnel*.

The dining-car was large enough to seat thirty at table. The furniture was of ordinary appearance; the chairs and arm-chairs, in Henri II. style, were in maroon leather. At one end there was a small smoking-room.

The drawing-room, decorated in old gold, contained a table, two tapestry sofas and several arm-chairs. In one corner was a small white lacquered table on which stood a long-necked vase always filled with flowers, and several photographs, including his own and that of the Empress, which he always took with him on his travels.

The coach containing the kitchen was remarkably fitted with kitchen range and utensils. We cannot supply any information as to the sleeping-car, as no one was allowed to enter it except the *valets de chambres*, and the curtains were always kept drawn.

Beside these triumphal cars another, which had known happier days before being imprisoned in a goods yard, was shunted about from time to time among the cattle-trucks. This coach was dark maroon colour, and contained three



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

compartments, drawing-room, bedroom and dressing-room. On the door was a coat of arms, surmounted by a crown. It had been used, we were told, by King Albert of Belgium, and was said to have been captured when the Barbarians entered Brussels.

The Boches had a special grudge against this unfortunate coach. It was left in a disgustingly dirty state. The varnish was beginning to peel off the woodwork; the crowns on the ceiling were broken, and one fine day the ex-royal coach, no longer in a condition to be used, disappeared from the station.

The Kaiser did not only receive visits from crown princes. The statesmen of the Alliance were also summoned, and the Austrian Counts Berchtold and Burian, the Turks Talaat Bey and Enver Pacha, and General von Bissing, the sinister Governor of Belgium, also paid several visits to Charleville.

Mr. Gerard, the United States Ambassador in Berlin, dealt with the *Lusitania* question at Charleville. The honourable diplomat describes his visit in his recently published memoirs.

Between times the Ambassador spent his time visiting, admired a splendid collection of exotic birds in the house of a retired prison warder in the suburbs of the town, inspected the working of the American relief in the Charleville district and saw young men and girls deported from Lille, Roubaix and Tourcoing, forced to heavy agricultural labour, which drew an indignant protest from the distinguished diplomat.

With the Kaiser and his Chancellor he engaged in diplomatic conversations which temporarily eased the situation, for on 1st May, at eleven o'clock in the evening, Mr. Gerard left Charleville in the same sleeping-car in which he had come. He arrived at 4 p.m. the next day in Berlin, which he was to leave finally on 5th February, 1917, after having asked for his passport to return to America via Switzerland.

At the Villa Perin the Kaiser did not only lodge royalty and distinguished diplomats. He also summoned to his presence the high dignitaries of the Church. When it was necessary to rouse the zeal of the German Catholics, he summoned the prelates from beyond the Rhine, and the Bishops of Metz and Trèves, the Cardinal-Archbishops of Breslau and Cologne responded obediently to the call of the King whom

## The Royal Palace

they regarded as a heretic. The Archbishop of Breslau came to Charleville on 16th January, 1915, and stayed at the Royal Palace. On 10th April it was the turn of Archbishop Hartmann of Cologne, who came with the Bishop of Trèves, Monseigneur Korum, to take the Kaiser's orders.

Monseigneur Korum, who is of Alsatian origin, came on a special mission. This is how the prelate's visit came about. The metropolitan bishop of Cologne, Cardinal Hartmann, had ordered a collection to be made for the German areas devastated by the Russians and he was anxious to hand the funds to William in person. In order to carry out this mission with proper ceremony, he brought with him the oldest bishop in Germany, the Bishop of Trèves, and Monseigneur Korum could not get out of this uncongenial task ; he had, moreover, already given a proof of his independence of authority. He was one of the adversaries of Bismarck, whom he opposed actively at the time of the *Kulturkampf*.

In the spring of 1916 Cardinal Hartmann came a second time to the front to lead a campaign in favour of the German war loan. He visited the rear line of the trenches, catechized all his chaplains and celebrated the pontifical mass in the French church at Charleville without the authority of its direct chief, his Eminence Cardinal Luçon, the heroic archbishop of Rheims La Martyre.

The Kaiser was present. In the choir, heavily decorated à la Boche, had been installed a throne for the Lutheran monarch who officially honoured with his presence a Catholic ceremony. In his sermon Cardinal Hartmann urged the troops to empty their purses before sacrificing for the Fatherland. With typical Teuton tact he indulged in base abuse and lying prophecies about the final overthrow of the hereditary enemy.

The Archbishop of Cologne, however, was bitterly disillusioned at Charleville. He assumed that the clergy of this parish would humbly bow the knee before his Eminence. The Catholic chaplain of the Court, Dr. Berg, a priest as thoroughly German as he was anti-French, ambitious, hypocritical and a liar, was entrusted with the task of dealing with Monseigneur Lejeune, the venerable *archiprêtre* who, supported by

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

his vicars, had always maintained a very dignified and brave attitude in the face of the enemy.

Monseigneur refused to go and salute the German prelate.

The Headquarters insisted, with the same lack of success. The Court Marshals made a supreme and threatening effort.

The *Archiprêtre* persisted in his refusal, and as the French priest was within his rights, the Cardinal had to swallow this affront without being able to make any reprisals. The German prelate nearly choked with rage.

The Maison Perin was always respected by its guests. Once, however, some visitors, claiming to be important German journalists, carried off a portrait of the mistress of the house, and left an impertinent note which the thief omitted to sign, substituting for his signature the words "A Boche." The caretaker of the house did not allow himself to be intimidated. He complained forcibly to the Kaiser, and the portrait, sent back by a Brussels photographer, was replaced in its former position.

A placard showed that the house was reserved for the service of his Majesty. It thus avoided pillage until a few days before the Armistice, when a fatigue-party came to steal some furniture which had attracted the attention of an officer of the Crown Prince's staff.

## CHAPTER V

### A ROYAL STROLLING PLAYER

THE Imperial Court was at length installed, under the direction of the High Steward of the Court, Count von Reischach, while the Military Cabinet, which found its home first in the offices of the *Petit Ardennais*, and subsequently in the house of Dr. Rozoy, Rue du Petit-Bois, started its work under the direction of General von Plessen, a personal friend of the Kaiser's.

Like his son, the latter was never in a hurry to go to the front. He never went there unless he was informed by telephone that some success had taken place. When that happened he started off in an imposing cortège, consisting of his own car and the six cars of the officers of his military household, an anti-aircraft gun mounted on a motor lorry and known as *La Jeannette*, and another lorry holding eighteen faithful soldiers of his guard to whom the protection of his precious person was entrusted. He remained only a short time in the rear lines at the front, for Charlemagne's successor had little stomach for danger, and returned a few hours later, after issuing to the echoes of the press his high-sounding orders of the day, or sending his pompous telegrams to the Kaiserin or his beloved Crown Prince, the skilful general of a new petticoat war.

Everything about him smacked of parade. He remembered the simplicity of Napoleon when in the field. He tried to imitate it. He slept on a camp bed of white lacquer, but instead of setting it in some miserable farm, or a tent among his soldiers, he established it in a luxurious villa which he had protected against bombs with a thick concrete shell, a villa



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

which lacked nothing in the way of comfort (modern) and refinement. Madame Georges Corneau's drawing-room had been transformed into a study. A large staff-map was hung on the wall and the table was filled high with papers and telegrams.

An army of servants was there to look after the master, who changed his clothes, including linen and silk stockings, several times a day. His Majesty despised such plebeian things as socks.

The household servants comprised the officials of the chef's department, who wore a green livery (and thus earned the sobriquet of "frogs"), and the chauffeurs and valets, who wore the field-grey uniform edged with silver ribbon and embroidered with the Imperial eagle.

His Majesty was an early riser. He was at work and busy with the post before seven o'clock. He then rode out to Vivier-Guyon, a group of farms near Charleville where a riding track had been laid. A road that he had specially made in Lécuyer woods brought him to the Aiglemont Road. He spent an hour there enjoying his riding and then returned in truly theatrical fashion in the midst of a glittering military escort. But this did not excite the curiosity of the inhabitants, who did not even take the trouble to stop when he passed.

When he was residing at the Villa Renaudin he passed through the village of Montcy-Notre-Dame and would gallop in the meadows by the Meuse before returning to his residence at Belair. His Imperial person was well protected. Policemen were concealed behind every bush, while sentries stood on guard at every turning.

When his ride was over he would turn up at the Préfecture in Mézières for the General Staff's report, visit a *Lazarett* (the German field-hospital) and then return for breakfast. He received at his table generals who were on their way to or from the front, generals on the Staff and the officers of his military household. Sometimes he gave ceremonial dinners, for example on military anniversaries, family birthdays, and to celebrate the visits of distinguished guests or the birthdays of his principal generals or admirals.

Then among his favourite guests was Bauer, the chief of

## A Royal Strolling Player

the secret police, who kept him posted on all the details of his work, and particularly on the activities of the French counter-espionage. One day in the spring of 1915, Bauer was invited to the Imperial table. The conversation veered round to the subject of popular feeling in Alsace-Lorraine, and it was on this occasion that William declared he would dictate peace to his enemies and compel them to hand over Wetterlé Blumenthal, Georges Weill (the gallant deputies for Colmar and Metz), Helvner (the tireless advocate of the French cause), Hansi and Zislin (the witty caricaturists of Pan-Germanism), and all the Alsace-Lorrainers of mark who had betrayed their German fatherland by deserting their country and entering the service of their hereditary enemy.

His meals, prepared by the chef's staff in the kitchens of the Hôtel du Nord, which had been appropriated for the Imperial use and cleared of its occupants, who were accommodated in an annexe, were very simple: soup, fish, a joint with vegetables, and dessert. Beer was the usual drink, but hock or Moselle appeared with the dessert.

A bakery, the owner of which had departed, had been specially requisitioned, and here was produced his white bread, which was not exactly war bread, the rolls for his breakfast and dinner parties and certain pâtisseries which were not made at the Hôtel du Nord.

The following menus, which were simply polygraphed on an ordinary card headed with an Imperial eagle, show what the Kaiser's-table was like; they run thus:

*December 27th, 1915.*

Royal table for the evening (Dinner).

Poulets rôtis.

Filets de Chevreuil froid avec salade.

Dessert.

*January 10th, 1916.*

Royal table for mid-day (Luncheon).

Oie rôtie avec des choux verts.

Gateaux de riz.

Fruits.

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

The menus of the great banquets were very similar, though they were relieved by hock, claret and Heidsieck-Monopole champagne. A military band completed the programme.

The banquets were held in the dining-room of the Hôtel du Nord and the tables were laden with glass and plate brought from Potsdam and flowers sent specially from Berlin.

The tapestries, hangings and furniture were borrowed from houses round. The plate was of solid silver and the china and glass were adorned with the Imperial arms. The dining hall was perfumed. The hall was decorated with plants, and garlands of leaves and flowers were draped round the pillars. A silver bell was placed close to the monarch, and he sometimes used it to command silence when the conversation became too noisy. Contrary to what might have been expected, there was no bust, either of himself or his deathless grandfather, and no flag to decorate the table.

The cruet stands, like the flowers, came from Berlin. Meat and poultry were kept in a special ice-house built for the Imperial kitchen in the garden. Whenever a dinner was to be given at the Hôtel du Nord the police made a most elaborate search in all the rooms, attics and cellars, and sentries were posted at all the doors.

The banquets were almost as modest as the ordinary meals: three courses and an entremets formed the menu. Here is the menu of January 27th, 1915, the Kaiser's birthday.

### GROSSES HAUPTQUARTIER *January 27th, 1915.*

#### Königliche Abendtaffel (Royal Table—Evening).

Caviar

Mousseux

Königennensuppe (Soupe à la royale)

'93 Steinberger Kabinet

Gefüllte Puten garnirt (Dinde Garnie)]

'06 Heidsieck

Strasburger Pateste (Pâte de Strasbourg)

'78 Château Montrose

Prinzessinen Reis (Riz à la Princesse)

Nachtsch (Dessert)

## A Royal Strolling Player

GROSSES HAUPTQUARTIER *March 22nd, 1915.*

Königliche Abendtaffel (Royal Table—Evening).

(Dinner given on the occasion of the anniversary of von Tirpitz's entry into the service.)

Krastlrühe mit Einlage (Purée au hachis)

Seezungen in Champagner (Filets de poisson au champagne)

Fruchtsalat (Salade mélange de fruits)

Spieszerrucken (Dos de dague)

'93 Rüdesheimer

Ganzleber Auflauf (Foie d'oie soufflé)

'06 Heidsieck

Frische grüne Erbsen (Petits pois nouveaux)

'78 Château Montrose

Vanillispeise (Crème à la Vanille)

Nachtsch (Dessert)

The meals of the General Staff affected the same Spartan frugality. This is the menu of a banquet given by General von Falkenhayn to the foreign military attachés :

Potage : Soupe à l'oseille

Rôti de Veau, pommes à la vapeur

Fromage

Münich beer and hock.

No fruit or dessert.

But let no one delude himself into thinking that this affectation of frugality had become second nature in military circles. The Crown Prince's table was most elaborately served, and the greatest delicacies of Belgium, Spain and Italy (before that country entered the war), the very best fish and the choicest game were considered hardly worthy of the delicate palates of the stoutest eaters in the General Staff.

The cellars of the Villa Renaudin still contain masses of corpses of our finest vintages to which his Highness did full justice.

As for our celebrated French wines, the Boche tipplers were abundantly supplied from the cellars of Charleville, which were scientifically looted by Count Arnim, brother of the general



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

of the same name, ably assisted by his accomplice, the N.C.O. Dr. Appens, inspector of schools in peace time. The powers of absorption of the officers were such that within a few months many hundreds of thousands of bottles they had discovered, either by requisition or denunciation, and ruthlessly stolen, were emptied of their precious contents.

In spite of the apparent frugality which William affected, Charleville was nothing but the scene of vast orgies organized by the highest representatives of the army and the aristocracy, who lived riotously day and night.

The virtuous exterior concealed a monstrous complex of depravity, vice and debauch which my pen refuses to dwell on, especially when it comes to describing the shameful scenes which distinguished a certain lonely villa, at the foot of Mont Olympe, which had been baptized, appropriately enough, the "Villa Eulenburg."

The Kaiser endeavoured always to make a great impression upon all who met or saw him. You could see him walking in the square by the station, his brows knitted but wearing an air of great dignity and always accompanied by his faithful basset hound. His atrophied left hand was fully visible. But he could not conceal the changes that had set their mark upon his features, and the sovereign who was still young when we first knew him at the beginning of the occupation had become a bent old man with haggard features and perfectly white hair in the last months of the war. He never managed to recover that air of majesty which distinguished him in the happier hours of the campaign ; the weight of remorse lay heavy on his shoulders.

However, he played the part all the same and was always ready to be photographed. The photographs of himself that he had taken at Charleville are numberless. He could be seen in every pose and every style of costume, walking in the park, riding or motoring, visiting the hospitals, chatting with the Kaiserin, an imposing lady with wonderful white hair, who was anxious to appear majestic but never managed to avoid seeming a parvenue. She came to see him twice in Charleville during 1915, but showed herself in the town very little, confining her appearances to visiting the hospitals.

## A Royal Strolling Player

For a *grand finale* the Crown Prince, Hindenburg and Ludendorff (who visited G.H.Q. very frequently) were photographed with him.

Very often, especially in the early days, he would go to the station when troops were passing through. He would have them drawn up on the square while he reviewed them and delivered a speech. He never failed to announce to them that victory was at hand, thanks to the God of the Boches, and adjured them to die bravely for their German Fatherland.

But it was at church, more than anywhere else, that he liked to be theatrical.

The Evangelical Church in the town was found too small, and he had a stable in the artillery barracks converted into the House of the Lord. A huge eagle with outstretched wings, the whole of stucco, was fixed on the wall and seemed ready to devour all France and cover the world with a colossal flag in the Boche national colours.

Below, a pulpit hung with a cloth of black, white and red stood ready for the preacher. In the first row an armchair on a small dais dominated a row of smaller chairs assigned to his sons, the princes of his family and his vassals: it was the Imperial throne. The rest of the faithful stood round in the great hall.

The Court chaplain, Pastor Doctor Goënz, officiated and delivered the set sermon. Sometimes his Imperial parishioner took his place in the pulpit and delivered the Word of God to his soldiers.

When the service was over the whole staff, the officials and domestics, the troops of the garrison and those merely passing through, were drawn up on the great Flanders road. The Kaiser reviewed them and delivered an impassioned harangue; then both officers and men defiled before their sovereign to the loud strains of fifes and drums.

This religious ceremony was not ventured upon until certain precautions had been taken, so great was the unfavourable impression made upon his German Majesty by French aviators. In the first place he had an armoured casement built round the stable-temple, proof against bombs and with several exits. Further, while he was parading before his troops on the public

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

road, machine-gun batteries were installed quite near and a squadron of Fokkers patrolled the heavens above.

William II., like his troops for the matter of that, had a great aversion to French aviators, and each of their visits filled him with painful apprehension, not unnaturally. Why, on two occasions, the French aces nearly hit God's anointed, who retained a very unpleasant recollection of these visits.

It was on 15th April, 1915, that our aeroplanes for the first time came to pay their respects to the Teuton monarch. Five bombs fell round the Imperial palace. One blew a hole in the station square, barely sixty yards from his residence, while another fell in a neighbouring house. The third and fourth damaged two houses in the Rue Daux, less than a hundred yards from the Villa Corneau, and a fifth got lost in the same vicinity.

The arrival of these birds of France was greeted with joy by the inhabitants, who had been expecting them long before. It was otherwise with the Germans, whose countenances showed signs of extreme consternation. In their amazement the machine gun placed on the roof of the station forgot to receive the enemy machines in a fitting manner, and when they had recovered from their surprise and wanted to get their gun into action it refused to work, like the legendary Belgian gun of the late King Leopold. The following day the machine gun was withdrawn and replaced by proper anti-aircraft defences, comprising searchlights, fixed batteries and motor-batteries.

From that day the Kaiser, who had vanished the minute the bombardment began, acquired the habit of moving his camp bed into different houses in the town with a view to balking the cunning of spies and escaping the sharp eyes of the French aviators.

The second alarm was even more disconcerting for the Kaiser. It occurred on 26th April, 1916. Haunted by fears of bombardment, the foundations of the Corneau house had been strengthened and dug-outs had been established in the many cellars in the town. Placards in German invited the subjects of his Majesty to take refuge there. That is what happened on the 26th April, 1916, at four o'clock in the morning, when



## A Royal Strolling Player

our aviators put in a fresh appearance. As on the first occasion, the weather was magnificent and the noise of the bombs brought the inhabitants out of their houses.

Of course they had taken the precaution of dressing quickly before coming out into the street. There they were permitted to behold a refreshing spectacle.

Faithfully carrying out the orders they had received, the Germans of all ranks rushed out into the streets to take refuge in the shelters. Unfortunately their haste was such that not one of them had given himself time to put on his trousers before appearing in public.

Imposing colonels, portly majors, officers, scared field-greys could be seen running in the streets, wearing diaphanous costumes and with their shirts waving disrespectfully at the mercy of an unkind spring breeze.

Only their flat caps indicated the quality and rank of the particular individual.

This strict fulfilment of orders had very effective results. The attendants of the Imperial train, instead of making for the deep cellars of the Hôtel du Nord, rushed to the dug-out established in the Café de l'Univers, forty yards away, at the very moment when a French bomb was descending from the sky. Not one of them escaped. The chief engineer, a personal friend of the Kaiser, the officer in charge of the train, the cooks and the ordinary attendants found a hero's death in their headlong panic-stricken flight.

Further, five soldiers were severely wounded. Yet the cellars of the Hôtel du Nord provided excellent shelter, but these slaves to duty fell victims to their desire to get to the *Schütze gegen Fliegerbomben* (bomb shelters). If they had stayed quietly where they were they would probably be alive to-day to meditate on the history of the greatest of great Germanys.

This time William had had enough. He left the Villa Corneau for the time being and made up his mind to change his habitation. His Court Marshal had orders to find a more suitable abode and his choice fell on the Villa Renaudin at Belair, where the journalists were installed. The latter were ordered to remove their household gods elsewhere. They



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

obeyed their orders, but not without carrying off part of the splendid furniture they considered so necessary to their well-being.

The Château Renaudin is a magnificent place, in a delightful situation, with a magnificent view. The rooms have that air of comfort and elegance which could not fail to please William. The dining-hall, with its superb furniture, was quite worthy of the receptions which the Sovereign gave for his distinguished guests. Yet there was a shortage of chairs: the Boche journalists had commandeered them. Skilful requisition soon produced other chairs in the style of the room.

The Kaiser took up his quarters in the room of Monsieur Henri Renaudin, manager of the "Compagnie de l'Est." He brought his camp bed with him and turned Madame Renaudin's bedroom into his study. The dressing-room seemed to him too small, so he had the walls removed which separated it from the linen room, thus enlarging it, and turned it into a bathroom. The bathroom of the house was not considered large enough. When Wilhelm Junior disappeared to Holland, bath and water-heating apparatus went with him.

The residence certainly pleased the lord of the Hohenzollerns. It had only one drawback: it was not sufficiently protected from the attentions of French aviators.

Anti-bomb defences were at once put in hand. The vestibules of each story were lit by sky-lights, and these were hardly a serious protection against bombs. A net, being an elastic mattress with the material so tightly compressed as to possess enormous resisting power, was put in position. It rested on mechanical buffers so that it would yield to the pressure of the projectile, and to meet the case of these buffers failing to effect their purpose a very large and flexible wire cage was installed to receive the second shock. This erection was to protect His Majesty's bedroom. Another net of the same kind and equally strong had been established in a neighbouring attic to protect the great room in which the receptions were held. Here were deposited the clothes and other things taken from the cupboards of the house in order to make room for the Imperial wardrobe. The clothes went to reward the ladies of the Kaiser and his son's suite. The rest was condemned to

## A Royal Strolling Player

systematic destruction, and the top-hats were distributed by the Crown Prince to the black prisoners of war who had been sent to him for his personal use. The crowned comedian thus hoped to pour ridicule on the French uniform.

These first measures of defence did not succeed in calming William's anxieties. He could never be sufficiently protected from bombs. The children's bedrooms were on the floor above immediately over the royal bedroom. Enormous iron beams were brought and placed to support a layer of solid concrete, a yard thick. Henceforward his Majesty thought he could sleep in peace.

However, he still ran the risk of being caught when walking in the park. When the latter was laid out a little pond had been built and the excavated earth had been thrown out in front to form a kind of wall, twelve yards high or so. This, with the pond as a ditch, formed a splendid and quite respectable fortification. Behind the pond the German engineers now constructed a powerful concrete dug-out with a thick layer of earth over it; the whole forming a casemate against which the best of bombs would explode in vain.

A whole series of passages with two exits led to a pretty large room, fitted with electric light, and a safe refuge against bombs and poison gas. Finally a kind of platform was built on a house near by. On this were installed anti-aircraft machine-guns, while a look-out post was established in the woods of the château from which the arrival of the birds of France could be observed.

These were serious precautions. Yet even these were not enough for the Crown Prince when he came to take his father's place at the Château Renaudin. The Kaiser had considered the cellars safe enough and had not deemed it necessary to have any alterations made. His degenerate son thought otherwise. He turned them into a subterranean chamber, compared to which the colossal dungeons of medieval châteaux were but a house of cards. A heavy oak door with the inscription *Eingang* (Entrance) led through a series of concreted passages to a casemate covered with concrete more than a yard thick. Two cast iron doors, more than two inches thick, with bolts as thick as your arm, defended the entrances. A

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

double band of impenetrable felt protected all the joins against the infiltration of poison gas. The chamber held about thirty persons. The walls were washed with ripolin and around the walls was a protection of oak four inches thick and four feet high. There was a cupboard in which were stored a Vermorel apparatus, oxygen tubes and capsules of hyposulphite for use in cases of gas-poisoning. The floor was covered with linoleum and the whole place was lit with electric light and suitably heated. To avoid accidents the electric wires ran through tubes of lead inside other tubes of copper.

An exit had been cut on the northern side of the house. It was not enough. The Prince had another winding passage built, twenty-five yards long, leading to an exit at one corner of the park. With a view to concealing this exit a charming copse was planted over the opening, thus giving the place the appearance of a pleasure ground.

When these defence works had been completed everybody felt relieved. William was able to dwell in peace in his new residence and considered himself safer than by the station square.

"*La troisième fois fait le droit*" ("The third time establishes a legal right"), says an old French proverb. Its truth was illustrated towards the end of the following summer, on August 9th, 1916, when a French aerial reconnaissance, not followed by bombing, took place. New batteries had been established in different places and it was hoped to forbid a passage to our aeroplanes by a very violent barrage. Our fliers were greeted by a heavy fire. It was about nine o'clock in the morning and William was out for his ride to Vivier-Guyon.

This morning's visit annoyed the Kaiser, who hastened to take refuge in a handy hut in a quarry. Nor did he come out until all danger was over, and then only to rush into his car and return to the Villa Renaudin at top speed.

To complete his discomfiture bad news had just come in from Austria. A Russian offensive had captured 80,000 of Francis-Joseph's soldiers. The Kaiser's presence was needed on the Russian front. His decision was soon taken. It was precipitated by the visit on August 14th of another

## A Royal Strolling Player

enemy airman, who flew over Belair, quite low down, at eleven o'clock in the evening.

A few days later, on August 16th, to be exact, the brave Kaiser said farewell to Charleville, where he was not to return, except for rare and very short visits. In the first instance, he went to his castle of Pless, in East Prussia, from which he directed the operations on the Eastern front. His health then became poor, and he went to take the waters at Wiesbaden. The castle of Wilhelmshöhe, his own place, had the honour of being his residence for some time. Shortly afterwards the General Staff and the larger part of General Headquarters removed to Kreuznach, and, towards the end of 1917, to Spa.

This brilliant behaviour greatly amused the inhabitants of the occupied regions and they could not help thinking of the "Marseillaise." The only thing was that certain alterations had taken place when the children sang it.

When the schoolboys spied the Kaiser, this is what they used to hum :

I'm not coming out of my quarry  
Till the French have all gone away,  
Though bullets don't make me worry  
And bombs I treat as play.  
I'm not going to bother to chase them,  
And I don't want to lie in my grave.  
I'm proud, but it's no good to face them  
If my own precious skin I would save.  
Help, Prussians, help ! Your lord must fly  
Or his tainted bones in this land may lie.

It was a lucky thing that the secret police never heard them, for otherwise this innocent joke would have become the terrible crime of treason.

A few weeks later, the merry Crown Prince took his august father's place at the Villa Renaudin.

Belair was *en fête*.



## CHAPTER VI

### WILLIAM II. AND THE FRENCH POPULATION

The Kaiser cultivates his popularity.—The visit of Pastor Goënz.—Demands for bread.—Business integrity.—An Emperor's munificence.—A present arrives at the wrong address.—A victory claimed in Russia.—“The bells must be rung.”—A mayor's firmness.—The empire's knell.—A profitable lesson.—No wish to know him.—The Belair incident.—The Kaiser and the “Marseillaise.”—Threats of reprisals.—Schoolboys in prison.—How to make them salute.—The baptism of “Copusse.”—William and the householders.—Those responsible for the war.—Peace at Bordeaux.—Plans for a Franco-German alliance against England.—William and the paralytic.—The Imperial memory.—A proud answer.—A crowned wood-cutter.—Visiting the châteaux.—A golden portrait.—At the castle of Bellevue.—An Emperor's French lesson.—The flags of Montcornet.—The last parade.—Giving back the villas.—Bethmann follows the example of his master.—The Imperial seal valueless.—From capital of an empire to capital of a *canton*.

ONE of William II.'s first political acts, immediately after his arrival at Charleville, was to try and work himself into the good graces of the French population.

At the beginning of October, 1914, Pastor Carpentier, an excellent Frenchman, whose patriotic attitude was well known, received a visit from Dr. Goënz, chaplain to the Guards and private chaplain to the Kaiser. He made the following declaration :

“I am charged by his Majesty to inform you that it is his wish that wherever he is no misery should exist. For this reason he has instructed me to beg you to let him know in what way he can relieve local distress.”

M. Carpentier acted as his colleagues' interpreter and the Municipal Commission replied that, as his Majesty was animated by such good intentions, he might use his authority to have flour sent to the town, which would be paid for. The supply of bread was almost exhausted and in spite of the repeated demands of the town no delivery had been made.

## William II. and the French Population

Some days later a note, "On His Majesty's Service," informed the municipality that 300 cwt. of wheat flour had been put at their disposal, at, if we remember right, 43fr. 20 per cwt., payable in French gold or German silver.

On the day fixed, however, the flour did not appear, and it was not until representations had been made to Dr. Goënz that a consignment of 300 cwt. was delivered at Charleville, more than a fortnight late. But instead of the promised wheat flour, the flour received was rye, almost uneatable, and at the price fixed for wheat flour. The Imperial generosity was then nothing but humbug.

A second trap was baited.

On 20th of October, M. Leon Pailliette, the ambassador of the Municipal Commission, whose diplomatic tact and patriotic firmness were of the greatest service, was summoned to the *Kommandatur*, and Rittmeister Schnitzer handed to him, in the name of the Kaiser, a sum of 3,000 marks for distribution among the poor of the three towns, 1,400 marks being specially earmarked for the poor of Charleville.

At the same time, a form of thanks, composed by the *Kommandatur*, was sent for the signature of the president of the Municipal Commission, and also to the municipal authorities of Mézières and Mohon, who had received similar gifts.

On 2nd of January, a gift of the same amount was sent on the occasion of the New Year, and on 27th of January, a sum of 3,000 marks was granted to the poor of Charleville, to mark the Kaiser's birthday.

The Municipal Commission would have liked to refuse such liberality, but it would have been very dangerous to raise such opposition and to rouse the Imperial wrath. It was decided therefore to assign this money to the work of the Vestiaire, which was looking after the clothing of poor children. But the visit to express gratitude which the Kaiser expected did not materialize.

The year after the same occasion gave rise to an incident.

M. Paul Gailly, the president of the Municipal Commission, met during the latter half of January Wolter, the deputy Chief of the Secret Police, who told him point-blank :

"The Director of the Secret Field Police is very surprised

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

at not having received the town's thanks for the new gift of the Emperor."

"Before expressing gratitude to the Emperor," M. Gailly replied bitingly, "it would be first necessary to receive the present of which you speak. We have heard nothing about it at the *Mairie*."

Wolter was not much put out and did not insist. The sum had possibly passed into the funds of the Secret Service. In any case the gift never reached the town hall, and no more was heard about the Imperial generosity.

These were the only attempts at a *rapprochement*, and it was probably reported in high places that the French authorities were frankly refractory, and resisted all German advances. Two fresh incidents went to confirm the enemy's opinion of the French administration.

On 17th of October, 1914, at 7 p.m., shortly after the first example of Imperial munificence, M. Paul Gailly, Vice-President of the Municipal Commission, received at his home the following order :

Grosses Hauptquartier  
2 Kommandant.

G.H.Q., 17th December, 1914.

Monsieur le Maire,

Hereby I have the honour to request you to have the bells of Charleville rung from 7 to 7.30. p.m. (German time), the hour when they will be rung in Germany, to announce to our troops a great and decisive victory over the Russian army, now in full retreat.

I have the honour to remain, Monsieur le Maire, etc.

A.-B.

Schnitzer,  
Captain.

The hour at which the letter was sent is a typical example of German duplicity. At that hour, the daily sitting of the Municipal Commission had adjourned, and M. P. Gailly had no time to collect his colleagues to consult as to what should be done. He was practically faced with a *fait accompli*. Further, the decisive victory over the Russians originated in the fertile imagination of G.H.Q. to stimulate the enthu-

## William II. and the French Population

siasm of the Landsturm troops who were to start for the front on the following day, and were showing signs of a certain unwillingness to risk their lives for the Fatherland.

What did M. Gailly do? He went at once to the *Kommandatur*, where he had an interview with Rittmeister Schnitzer. He pointed out to him that the *Mairie* only possessed one bell, the alarm bell; that, in spite of the occupation, the town was still under French legislation, and that, since the law separating Church and State, the municipality had no jurisdiction over the parish church, of which *M. l'Archiprêtre* was the sole master. The brave councillor added that there was another point of equal importance: that a municipal administration of occupied France could not give an order for a town which was still French to join in the celebration of a German victory.

"Then," replied Schnitzer, "you refuse to give the order and I have only to inform the Commandant of your refusal."

M. Gailly made no direct reply to this question. He merely added: "You are the masters and you can have the bells rung, if you like. All we ask is that you do it yourselves."

Schnitzer retorted that he had no orders to act in this way. Then M. Gailly added: "If you insist on having the bells rung, as your note indicates, you will attain your end by having them rung and by sending your soldiers to fetch the ringer. If you refuse it means that you wish at the same time to wound the feelings of the population. Now, up to the present, you have always shown a correct attitude towards us, for which we give you credit. I think that on your side you will admit that we have done our best to behave to you in the same way and will also give us credit for this. We ask you to continue in the same way."

The terrible Rittmeister went out to report to the deputy commandant, Lieutenant-Colonel von Hahnke, the emphatic remarks of M. Gailly. He returned some minutes later and said: "Monsieur Gailly, since you claim to have no authority over the church, don't take any further steps in the matter; we will act accordingly."

The Vice-President of the Municipal Commission then went to see *M. l'Archiprêtre*, and informed him of the situation.



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

At 9 p.m., some German police, escorted by soldiers, came to fetch the keys of the church and rang the bells themselves. They made a fine hubbub. The inhabitants, astonished at these belated janglings, wondered anxiously if a band of lunatics had broken into the church to indulge in an orgy. It can be imagined what amusement there was on the following day, when the reason for these frenzied peals was known.

The Abbé Nicolas, the parish priest of Belair, a quarter of Charleville where the Emperor lived some months later, also received an order to hand over the keys of his church at the same hour, and for the same purpose. The venerable ecclesiastic refused point-blank. The officer charged with carrying out these orders ordered his men to level their rifles at him, but in spite of this characteristic threat, the priest persisted in his refusal. The German took the keys by force and a band of field-greys, flushed with wine, burst into the belfry, while others stripped the altar of its candles, lit them and indulged in a wild dance in the churchyard to the tune of an Austrian hymn.

On the following 27th January, the Emperor's birthday, a new order came for the bells to be rung. The order was transmitted to the *Archiprêtre*, who carried it out in his own way.

In the morning of the 27th, the inhabitants were astonished to hear the church bells tolling the funeral knell employed for important funerals. It was a witty way of celebrating the Kaiser's birthday. All the French were delighted at this amusing practical joke. The Germans did not dare to show their anger: the laugh would not have been on their side, but they were finally cured of their insolent mania.

The public always treated the Kaiser with perfect indifference. William passed unnoticed: he did not even attract curiosity, and that in spite of all his studied politeness—for he was the first to raise his hat when a lady passed—*no one wanted to know him*.

In his thirst for popularity, the Kaiser would have liked a gesture of greeting from the inhabitants. He only succeeded in causing an incident which, but for the intervention of the municipal authorities, might have had deplorable consequences. As the monarch intended to take a walk in Belair on Sunday, 2nd April, 1916, his private physician, Dr. Wezel, informed

## William II. and the French Population

the parish priest that the Kaiser would like an acknowledgment of the salutes with which he greeted the passers-by, and that if anyone did not wish to conform to this request, he had only to stay at home. He was particularly anxious that the children should show respect to his Boche Majesty.

The priest found the commission little to his taste, and, to avoid any possibility of offence, he took the boys under his charge to have a game of football in a meadow some way from the suburb.

As ill luck would have it, the priest was recalled to his parish on urgent business, and the bursting of the ball put a stop to the game. The boys returned to Belair, whistling the "Marseillaise," just at the moment when the master of Germany's destinies was taking his walk.

In the course of this same walk, the Hohenzollern met a party of ladies who, talking among themselves, did not acknowledge the Imperial salute. Monsieur B—, an inhabitant of the town, acted in the same way. The mighty personage frowned. In his view he had been insulted. The next day the priest of Belair, M. B—, and the children were arrested, and Dr. Wezel informed the municipality that if such a thing occurred again he would give orders to have Belair cleared of its inhabitants. The inhabitants had to be discreetly warned of this intention, and, the innocence of M. Nicolas, M. B—, and the boys having been established, they were set at liberty.

It was thought that the incident was closed when Count Wengerski, representing the General Staff on the committee of American relief, called M. Paul Gailly before him and informed him officially of the wishes of his Majesty's military household with regard to the attitude of the population towards the officers of the Emperor's personal suite.

It appeared from this conversation that the High Court Marshal did not wish to impose drastic orders, forcing the inhabitants to salute the Emperor and his Staff, but that he would be glad if the Municipal Commission could find means of letting the population understand that they would be performing an act of high courtesy towards the Sovereign and the officers who wore a double amaranthine stripe on their trousers.

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

M. Gailly replied that it was very difficult for a French municipality to give orders that should only emanate from those who had a right to give them, and that the only way of obtaining any result was to ask those who had influence in certain quarters to do nothing, on meeting the Emperor and his officers, that would be likely to cause difficulty and annoyance to the population and its representatives.

Count Wengerski asked for time to think it over. The Municipal Commission heard no more of the Belair incident ; William had realized that to push the matter too far would expose him to ridicule.

Dr. Wezel, for his part, went to see the head master of the boys' school at Belair, M. Blanchemanche. He would listen to no explanation and made him responsible for the conduct of his pupils. He concluded with the threat : " The ' écoliens ' (*sic*) must salute or be sent to prison."

The inhabitants of Charleville and Mézières continued to pass the King of Prussia in the street without deigning to pay him the least attention.

He inspired so little respect that he was nicknamed " Copusse," the name of a poor half-witted fellow well known in the country. This nickname stuck to him, and even reached the firing-line. The German authorities, hearing about it, had to take severe measures even in the trenches to prevent soldiers and civilians from making fun in this way of the Hohenzollern monarch.

William, whose private life, unlike that of the Crown Prince, was above reproach, studied his bearing, which he tried to make impressive and would have liked to make attractive.

Since his arrival in 1914, he chatted familiarly with the domestic staff at the Prévost bank, including the gardener, whose blunt common sense he probably admired.

In September, 1914, he declared his ardent sympathy with France and deplored the scourge which was ravaging Europe, the responsibility for which he placed at the door of England.

" How many things," he would say to this worthy man, " we could have accomplished if only France and Germany had been allied ! Alas ! This beautiful country is a prey to Jews and Freemasons, who are the thorn in the side of the



## William II. and the French Population

Republic and have brought upon her the war from which we are all suffering.

"The Republic can never be the real government of France.

"I have no animosity against your country. The war will soon be over. I am going to sign peace with France at Bordeaux. I shall be very generous towards her. France will recognize at last her true friends, and we shall form a powerful alliance to drive England from French soil and give back to your country Dunkerque, Calais and Boulogne, which the English will know how to keep as the price of their intervention."

Then he would talk gardening and give advice on grafting trees and cultivating plants, for this man, thinking himself omniscient, talked of everything as an expert.

This conversation, which we guarantee strictly true, was repeated to a number of people whom he met on his walks.

He always cultivated the theatrical side. He liked people to talk about him and to praise his ability.

When he lived in the Château Renaudin, one of his distractions was to go from house to house and enter into conversation with the people he visited.

At Belair he had struck up acquaintance with a paralytic whom he went to see every day. In fine weather this poor man was carried out in front of the door to get a breath of the pure, life-giving air of the forest of the Ardennes. But his financial position would not allow him to buy himself a mechanical carriage for his airings. The unfortunate invalid complained of this to his Majesty. William, always generous, promised to satisfy this wish. Doubtless a king's whims are not always promptly realized, for the poor cripple had to wait a long time for the promised carriage.

At last, at the beginning of 1918, the Kaiser came to Belair to preside over a council of war. The paralytic reminded him of his promise. This time he had to keep it, and Dr. Appens, an N.C.O. whose duty in time of peace, in his capacity of inspector of elementary schools, was to instil into Boche schoolboys respect of property, and in time of war to plunder that same property, was requested to obtain in Charleville the carriage required.

The only one to be found in the town was in a house



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

inhabited by an officer of the *Kommandatur*. It was immediately requisitioned from its lawful owner and presented personally by William to his protégé. The latter was overcome with gratitude. The Kaiser was pleased: he thought he had enhanced his popularity and his generosity had not cost him much. But the parsimony of the Hohenzollerns is proverbial.

He also liked to take walks in the woods near the town and to stop the women who were collecting their scanty store of wood for the winter. He would talk to them, interest himself in their families and, at the beginning of his stay, give them a five-mark piece, being careful to add: "Keep it as a souvenir. It is a present from the Emperor of Germany."

This generosity was short-lived. The prodigal William soon reduced his charity account: from five marks the present was reduced to two and then to twenty-five sous.

Another time he met a splendid girl, supple in body, with delicate features and hair of bright gold. This combination of health and beauty, in spite of the worn clothes, in a girl of the people attracted his attention. He congratulated her and suddenly asked: "You are German, my child?"

"No, monsieur," she replied, "I am French!"

"You must have German connections in your family?"

"No, sir," she insisted emphatically. "There has never been any German blood in my family. I am French, very French, and I intend always to remain French."

The crowned Boche did not insist further: he broke off the conversation abruptly.

This hail-fellow-well-met attitude suited this theatrical character, but did not satisfy his thirst for admiration. He wanted to pass himself off as a manual worker.

When he inhabited the Hôtel Corneau, he amused the French occupants of the Prévost bank by devoting himself to felling trees in the park. When he moved into the Villa Renaudin, he had a carpenter's shop fitted up and indulged in his favourite hobby.

His residence was not far from the road from Charleville to Nouzon. Another property belonging to M. Renaud bordered this important highway. It contained a little wood with some magnificent trees. The Imperial mountebank chose

## William II. and the French Population

it for the scene of his labours. The passers-by were therefore very astonished to see the German Sovereign strip off his field-marshal's tunic and set about felling the superb trees which were the ornament of the estate.

When his woodman's task was over he would take a whip-saw and cut up the timber that he had felled. His ankylosed left arm, which he could not use, prevented him from completing this intellectual task.

When the Crown Prince was visiting Charleville he used to help him with this work. Otherwise he would call in the assistance of a soldier, who would have preferred to be elsewhere to collaborating with his Emperor in manual labour.

One day an officer from the front was passing and saw this wood-cutter in uniform. He questioned an orderly, who told him who it was. "Der ist unser Kaiser?" (That is our Emperor?) he asked with amazement.

Receiving an affirmative reply the officer roared with laughter and went on his way, shrugging his shoulders.

The sawn wood was then distributed among the necessitous families of Belair. There were three distributions. Their object was to create a sympathetic atmosphere with the wood of the local landowners without costing the civil list a penny.

All these efforts of William fell flat, however. The public passed and looked. Like the German officer, they shrugged their shoulders or laughed: the Kaiser as a workman did not impress them. They could not understand why the head of an army of more than eight million men should need to saw wood in order to win battles.

One of his favourite occupations was to visit all the châteaux in the neighbourhood. This was less dangerous than visiting the trenches. As a rule he only found a bailiff or caretaker.

At the end of his visit he would thank the caretaker for his kindness and give him a twenty-mark piece, adding: "I am giving you a portrait of myself; it is in gold!"

But William reckoned that this fancy of his was becoming too expensive and afterwards was content to distribute five-mark pieces. The portrait became a silver one.

When the representative of the landowner was a more exalted person than a caretaker or gardener he would change

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

the form of his present. In these cases he would send, some days after his visit, a gold tie-pin with the initial "W" surmounted by a royal crown. He met with several misadventures in the course of his wanderings. Almost immediately after his arrival in Charleville he visited the historic château of Bellevue, where Napoleon III., after the capitulation of Sedan, surrendered his sword to King William of Prussia, the grandfather of the vanquished emperor of 1918.

On the day of the crossing of the Meuse at Sedan on the 25th August, 1914, the park of the château had been the scene of bloody fighting and the property had been sacked by the Barbarians.

After inspecting the château and the garden and admiring the view of the Meuse valley from the terrace, the Emperor asked to see the proprietor, the widowed Mme. Ninnin. It was very difficult for her to refuse this request, so she had to consent to receive an enemy whose grandfather had already rent her Frenchwoman's heart in this very place.

In the course of the conversation the father of the Crown Prince alluded to the damage he had noticed and asked who was the cause of it.

"Your troops," replied Mme. Ninnin proudly. "It was they who did the damage after the battle."

"In that case," answered the Kaiser, "you will permit me, madame, to contribute towards the cost of repair?"

"No, sir," retorted the lady firmly, "I require no help to repair my property. I shall look after that myself. I have only one thing to ask of you, and that is that you protect my house from the intruders who come here and behave as though they are in a conquered country."

In face of this attitude the monarch did not insist. He promised to do what she had asked and withdrew; then, at the moment of departure, a general came back to the room in which Mme. Ninnin was, and, without any explanation, placed on the mantelpiece a 1,000-mark note and withdrew so hastily that Mme. Ninnin had not time to ask what was meant. The poor got the benefit of the gift. William's 1,000 marks were given to the aged people of the Little Sisters of the Poor in Glaires, who had suffered by the battle.

This visit did no good to the Ninnin family, for, in December,



## William II. and the French Population

1917, Madame Ninnin's son, a Sedan lawyer, was placed on the list of hostages sent to Russia, where, in the camps of Miljegany and Block-Roon near Vilna, he tasted the horrible barbarities of the descendants of Attila.

On another occasion he was visiting the ruins of the Château de Montcornet. Afterwards he went into the humble church of the village, but, hardly had he entered the sanctuary, than he came out again : the parish priest, who had always shown himself a brave and devoted patriot, had decorated the altar with red-white-and-blue flags.

The priest expected reprisals, but nothing happened.

The Emperor must have been in an indulgent mood that day.

Such were his ordinary relaxations.

His last theatrical action was in December, 1917, a few days before Christmas.

Hitherto he had been content to hold reviews on the old race-course, now called the *Paradeplatz*, but the French were rigorously excluded from these military displays.

This time he chose the Place Ducale to provide the French public with a spectacle and gave as an excuse the decoration of a lieutenant-general with the order *Pour le Mérite*.

The ceremony was to take place at eight o'clock in the evening, and the Place Ducale, where the town hall stands, had been appropriated for the occasion. It was very cold ; braziers had been placed here and there. Wreaths of fir had been woven and electric light installed. The effect was apparently intended to be fairy-like. It was far from being artistic, however, being heavy and clumsy. The corps of officers and the troops of the garrison were drawn up in a square, while the Sovereign, mounted on the terrace of the Hôtel de Ville, and supported by the Crown Prince and the Staff, harangued his faithful troops. A military band accompanied the royal speech with the *Wacht am Rhein* and *Heil dir in Siegerkranz*, the national anthems. He hoped to hear cheers. There were none. The inhabitants had been given permission to remain out of doors until eleven o'clock, but, with very few exceptions, the whole population refrained from attending the Imperial parade.

To begin with, service was held in the Catholic Church of the



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

Boulevard Gambetta, which had been transformed into a Lutheran temple. Carpets, armchairs and chairs were borrowed from different drawing-rooms in the town. They were never restored to their owners.

William was no more successful than he had been before. It was the end of his relations with the inhabitants. He understood at last that he would always remain an enemy.

He returned several times since, at the opening of each big offensive, but he always refrained from appearing in public: all his theatrical turns had been failures.

Before he transferred G.H.Q. to Spa, for he left Charleville on 16th August, 1916, William wanted to make it clear that he did not steal clocks. On 22nd February, 1917, his Court Marshal told off one of his officers, Lieutenant Keestener, to hand over to M. Léon Paillette, municipal councillor of Charleville, and the Abbé Bihery, to whom the *Kommandatur* had given the title of confidential cleric, the keys of the Château Renaudin. The places were inspected. The two houses were sealed and an official deed of surrender in good condition was drawn up by the second in command G.H.Q.

To prove that the Emperor had not stolen anything, several baskets of wine from the cellar of M. Georges Corneau, closed with the Imperial seal, were deposited at the Mairie to be handed in due course to their owner. Their immunity, however, did not last long, for almost immediately after the arrival of the Inspectorate of Lines of Communication of the 1st Army at Charleville, the Inspector, Lieutenant-General von Heydebreck, disregarding the Imperial will and seals, had M. Corneau's baskets of wine removed from M. Paul Gailly's house, where they had been left, and appropriated them for his own use.

It was the same with the villa in the Place de la Gare. A few days after the handing over of the property, the seals placed on the back of the house were broken and Boche officers and men rifled with impunity the silver and art treasures that their Kaiser had left.

A short time before, 20th February, 1917, the Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, handed over in the same way M. Edouard Prévost's house, where for only too long a period he and his august master had directed the policy of Germany. Charle-

## William II. and the French Population

ville had fallen from its rank of capital: it was to become the centre of the pleasures of the heir to the throne.

### THE LAST DAYS OF THE EMPIRE

It is very difficult for us to follow the Kaiser in his constant wanderings. The strict internment to which we were subjected and the absence of news from outside prevented us from following the journeys of this indefatigable traveller.

We only know that William II. left Spa at half-past nine in the evening of 9th November, 1918, for the Dutch frontier. As most of the trains were full of revolutionary soldiers it was intended to take him and his suite to Holland by aeroplane, but it was decided otherwise, and the Emperor travelled by train as far as La Reid, two stations away from Spa. The same afternoon he summoned the Crown Prince to join him.

At La Reid the Kaiser and his suite crossed by motor-car into the kingdom of Queen Wilhelmina. No one knew about this journey, which was kept secret until after the departure of the dethroned Cæsar.

At the beginning of November, when the situation was critical, the Kaiser could not make up his mind to abdicate. His entourage had tried to bring pressure on him to prevent him from making such a decision.

On 8th November, in the evening, the news arrived that a Naval Division from Flanders was marching on Spa to force the Sovereign to abdicate. The General Staff building was surrounded by the Guards to arrest the march of the mutinous troops. Unfortunately for him, the Kaiser could not rely on the loyalty of the Guards, who threw down their arms and refused to fire on their comrades. Admiral von Hintze, the last Foreign Minister, appointed a few days before the Armistice, and head of the political department of G.H.Q., intervened and strongly advised abdication. It was not until 9th November that the last Emperor of Germany finally made up his mind to this peace move and signed his abdication in the drawing-room of the Hôtel Britannique. He retired to the Castle of Amerongen, where he will find time to write his memoirs, if the Entente do not demand his extradition to punish him for all his crimes.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE KAISER'S DOCTOR AND "THE IMPERIAL POUF"\*

(Doctor Wezel)

Festivities at G.H.Q.—The Emperor's sons at Charleville.—Oscar an undiscriminating drinker.—Joachim's facetiousness.—*Tire la patte*.—An old roué and an old fool.—The governor of Belair.—The Geneva Convention trampled underfoot.—Fine answer of the martyrs.—Brutal expulsion.—Hunting down the sick.—Rat poison as a purgative.—A famous charlatan.—Municipal patriotism recognized by a Boche.—A benefactor of humanity.—Small presents that keep friendship alive.—Christmas geese.—Paying the bill.—Milk the wine of the aged, wine the milk of Wezel.—A Saint Vincent de Paul in a spiked helmet.—How to wring gratitude from children.—The adventures of a little spy.—The sisters' tyrant.—Sister Edwige, a worldly nun.—Respect "*La Wezel*."—Lucrative inspection of morals.—An expensive injection.—Wezel as "*Alphonse*."—Wezel the patron of . . . *Maison Tellier*.—Motherly advice.—"Ladies to the drawing-room."—Imperial patronage.—The week's takings.—Failure of the management.—How prostitutes were recruited at G.H.Q.—A paying profession.—Proprietor at Dresden.—Honeymoon.

IT is impossible for us to describe all the officers at G.H.Q. in this work. There were too many of them: more than six hundred general officers formed the military cabinet, the General Staff and other departments of G.H.Q. There would be little to tell about them, for the majority, belonging to the highest families of Germany, behaved correctly enough from the official point of view. Their private life was less irreproachable. Life at G.H.Q. was a succession of daily festivity. The tables were loaded with good cheer, and other

\* The word *Pouf* was used by the Germans to indicate certain *maisons closes* specially set apart for the troops.

## The Kaiser's Doctor

pleasant diversions made them prefer life at Charleville to the dangers of the front.

Among the princely personages in the Kaiser's suite must be mentioned his sons, who were summoned to their father to take part in the military displays or to receive paternal scoldings. Prince Eitel was his favourite and observed a certain decorum. Oscar was a coarse drinker who could not distinguish between the ordinary brandy, which was christened "Fine-Oscar" after he tasted some at the station refreshment room, and the choice *Grandes Champagnes*. Joachim was a gay night-bird. He was once unceremoniously turned out of a certain *maison close* by the proprietor for wishing to carry off his wife in a car. Adalbert, the sailor of the family, is not the hero of any scandalous stories.

Round the Imperial princes gathered several other members of the Prussian royal house: Waldemar, son of the Emperor's brother and nephew on his mother's side of the Czar Nicholas, a poor, puny child who limped badly and was nicknamed "Tire la Patte" by the street boys. Too sickly to get into mischief, his thoughts were occupied by looking after his delicate health.

Prince Leopold of Prussia, Colonel-General of Dragoons, grandson of Frederic-Charles, the red hussar, the hangman of Châteaudun and father of Prince Frederic-Charles, named after his great-grandfather, killed while flying, had only one passion, shooting. He shot from morning till night, and hares, rabbits, partridges and pheasants were the only enemies he brought down.

The Prince of Schoenburg-Lippe, whose brother George, the reigning princelet, had married William's sister, was an inveterate drunkard. He indulged in the most awful orgies, often in the company of the Crown Prince, and took part in several gallant adventures which, in ordinary times, would have brought this "Old Roué," as he was called, before the assize court. The Emperor held him in little esteem and only invited him to his table when obliged to; Schoenburg, on his side, avoided the Court, and the invitations were to him irksome duties which he sought to avoid.

More than sixty years of age, the excesses to which he was



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

addicted affected his reason, and he was finally sent to Frankfurt am Main to be treated by German mental specialists.

There is, however, one person whom we ought not to separate from the Kaiser, for he belonged to the inner circle of his intimates and confidential entourage. We mean Dr. Wezel.

This staff-surgeon, whose German sister had married a Frenchman from the neighbourhood of Maubeuge, was William's second doctor, but he enjoyed the confidence of his sovereign, who frequently sent him on private errands among the French population. He tried to win the sympathy of the inhabitants of Belair, where he had met the lady of his choice. He assumed the position of his master's agent, and well deserved his nickname, "Governor of Belair."

Thin Dr. Wezel, beardless and of uncertain age, was a prey to inordinate ambition which, combined with a greed of gain, made him very odious. His fortunes being slender, he sought to make himself the chief doctor of Charleville, while at the same time accumulating a competence which would enable him to gratify his appetites. It did not matter how this was done, as will be seen in this chapter.

He wanted to take over the Civil Hospital and become its chief surgeon. This establishment was under the direction of Dr. Richelet.\* With this in view he established a German annexe and did all he could to obtain control of the whole.

On 14th November, 1914, he came to inspect the wards. In one of them, side by side with French wounded soldiers, were some civilians who, while crossing the Meuse on 29th August, the day Charleville was occupied, were hit by German bullets. One had had to have his leg amputated. In the same ward two unfortunate orphan children were lying, victims of the Boche. The first, Achille Vaucherot of Haybes-sur-Meuse, had been seriously wounded by the Barbarians at the time of the massacre and burning of this place. The other, Emile Jeunehomme of Nouzon, had had his skull broken by a bullet, while the Saxons, who had set fire to his home,

\* His devoted care for the patients and his admirable direction of the hospital during the bombardment of 10th November, 1918, won him the *Croix de Guerre*.

## The Kaiser's Doctor

were murdering his mother and sister before his eyes. Both these poor children died of their wounds soon afterwards.

Wezel tried to be facetious. Turning to Vaucherot, he said : " So you hurt yourself while playing ? "

" No, I was not playing. The Prussians shot me like a rabbit while I was running away from our house, they had set on fire."

" And you," he said to Emile Jeunehomme, " you've been fighting with your playmates ? "

" I haven't been fighting," answered the little boy. " The Prussians did it. They killed my mother and sister, too, and set fire to our house."

Wezel had no luck. Gérard was, perhaps, not a victim of the Boches.

" I suppose your condition is a result of an accident while at your work ? " he asked him.

" There wasn't any accident," the poor fellow protested. " I was shot by the dirty Boches."

The doctor tried to impose silence, but little Jeunehomme persisted : " Yes, I will say it again. It is the Prussians who killed my mother and sister and they tried to kill me too ! " while Gérard went on repeating : " Shot by the dirty Boches."

The Emperor's private physician did not continue his investigations. He withdrew hurriedly without waiting for any more.

A few days later, however, some motor-drivers (they were not hospital orderlies) deposited at the doors of the wounded ward some women patients and shouted brutally : " Heraus, die Verwundeten ! " (Clear out the wounded !) and forced the staff to remove our unfortunate men, at once, and without any preparation, to a distant wing which had not been made ready for their reception.

He took over a certain number of wards which he called the German section and tried to obtain patients. To do this he hunted the town for sick folk, and after a preliminary examination in their homes, persuaded them to come to the hospital for a consultation, where he admitted them as urgent cases. He liked to assemble all these out-patients in a circle in one of the wards and walk round them asking how they felt. He would then return with medicines which

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

he distributed right and left, without remembering what their complaints were. He didn't even take the trouble to examine the records. Once he gave a patient some rat poison. The poor wretch appealed to one of the sisters, Sister Jeanne, an admirable nun whose exertions and sufferings under a Boche like Wezel have been rewarded by the *Croix de Guerre*, asking her how the medicine was to be used. Sister Jeanne laughed and sent it back to the doctor to ask for an explanation. The latter, rather crestfallen, gave another drug and went on with his rounds.

Among impartial witnesses in a good position to judge, this notorious doctor was recognized as a thorough charlatan.

Charlatan ! the word is no exaggeration. What else could a man be who got Scheuermann, the famous correspondent of the *Rhenish and Westphalian Gazette*, at that time special correspondent of the *Deutsche Tageszeitung* at Versailles, and about whom we shall have more to say later, to write a panegyric of him in the *Almanach de la Gazette des Ardennes*, 1916 ?

Scheuermann heads his dithyramb : " The German Doctor." He pictures Charleville, Mézières and Mohon as a collection, in peace time, of 40,000 inhabitants reduced to half since the panic of 1914 and left without medical help. Two doctors stayed behind. " Some," says this Boche journalist, " were mobilized ; others, doubtless, took part in the stampede of the leisured classes before the approach of the Germans.

" Happily the charitable heart of the good German doctor was melted by all this suffering when the hospitals were crowded with wounded and the local authorities took up the quasi patriotic attitude of turning a deaf ear to all suggestions coming from a German source, even when the good intention was obvious . . . "

Wezel commandeered one part of the civil hospital of Charleville, staffed it with nurses of Saint Vincent de Paul, taken from the French section, and gave gratuitous consultations, " Of which a large number of patients took advantage, in spite of the *secret terrorism* of part of the population, for there was a risk of being put on the list of unpatriotic citizens by the *exalted chauvinist*. . . . "



## The Kaiser's Doctor

According to Scheurmann, Wezel is a model of devotion.

His attendance was gratuitous as Scheuermann affirms. But he accepted all kinds of presents which he solicited very discreetly and was very skilful in obtaining. He would accept anything : silver, ribbons, cashmere shawls, tapestry, clothing and antiques, for which he had a special liking. Fond of good wine, he had contrived to spoil the famous cellar of one of his Mézières patients in exchange for milk, which he drew from the municipal dairies for the patients of the hospital.

From the country he was supplied with provisions of all kinds. Butter, poultry, pork ; he refused nothing. He started keeping choice poultry, and the splendid geese which he had secured at small cost, and which were the pride of his country house, were much admired by the passers-by. He fed them up with particular care in view of the approaching Christmas festivities, but the saviours of the Capitol tempted a connoisseur, and one fine morning Wezel was thrown into despair by the disappearance of his beloved birds.

To his great chagrin they formed a Frenchman's Christmas dinner instead.

" Medicines were gratuitous," said the *Almanach de la Gazette*. It was easy for him to distribute them gratuitously.

French pharmacies had been requisitioned and supplied him from their French stocks, without payment, while the medical supplies obtained from Germany were paid for by the municipal funds and even by the patients. He told them that he had to pay ready money and that they must help him to raise it.

" The township of Charleville," he said, " had never regularly subscribed to the upkeep of the hospital." If the municipal books are examined they will convict Wezel of imposture. Each quarter the municipal receiver had to meet the cost of the medical attendance and medical supplies of the German section, and the whims and generosity of Wezel cost the relief fund more than 100,000 francs for the care not only of ordinary patients but also the prostitutes who were admitted in large numbers. New wards had to be built and specially fitted up.

There was also the traffic in milk. At first his patients at the hospital were well supplied. Gradually, however, the



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

ration diminished, for Wezel commandeered the greater part for his civilian patients, until, finally, those patients whose complaints made necessary the daily supply of a certain quantity of milk were cut down to half or quarter of a litre.

During the first year the Emperor's doctor was fairly regular in his visits; the second year this regularity fell off, and afterwards he hardly ever appeared at the hospital at all. He left his duties to his assistant, Dr. Craye, who, to give him his due, discharged them conscientiously and took no trouble to hide his opinion of his chief.

Wezel also tried to pose as the rescuer of children. In an illustrated magazine, "The Album of the Great War," distributed over the occupied territory, to demoralize the French, he is shown sitting on a bench in the orphanage with two little orphans on his knees, to whom he is giving sweets. In *l'Almanach de la Gazette* he is seen chatting to two little patients. He is even described by Scheuermann as a Saint Vincent de Paul in a spiked helmet.

" . . . And quite charming is the gratitude which shines in the faces of the little boys and girls in this section of the hospital. There is René, a little chap of five. He says he never wants to leave Uncle Wezel. Just before the New Year there was a sort of conspiracy among the little folk: they whispered together, they had secrets in common, they asked the sisters for pen and ink. And on the first of January a letter was presented to the doctor, written by Carmen, a little girl of nine, on behalf of her companions, Alice, Raymonde, René and Jean, *all between four and six!* Mlle. Carmen declared, in her best handwriting, that her friends were still too young to express themselves in writing, but that their wishes came from their hearts. Certainly this touching mark of gratitude from the child of a poor working man or farm labourer will be the most gratifying reward for the labours of the *benefactors* who have never solicited (?) or expected a word of thanks from another quarter. . . ."

What a comedy! Wezel prompted this spontaneous gratitude every day. He used to say to these poor children who had no will or judgment of their own: "Am I not good to you; am I not always kind?"

## The Kaiser's Doctor

And they would answer innocently : " Yes, doctor."

It was he who inspired and dictated Carmen's letter. When the hospital was visited by persons of importance, like Bethmann-Hollweg or a Prince of Bavaria, the benevolent doctor would rehearse the children beforehand and so he won the princely congratulations. He had trained one little girl, Paulette F——, whose mother had left the occupied territory, to spy on the sisters and patients, and this eavesdropper used to repeat to the doctor the conversations she had overheard.

Wezel was on the contrary an insufferable tyrant. His overbearing behaviour oppressed everyone, and Sister Jeanne, who was put in special charge of the German annexe, was the greatest sufferer from his tyranny.

At every turn he reprimanded her :

" Try to obey," he would say. " You are nobody, you and your administration. I am the master, I am in command here. Do what I tell you and don't argue. If you force me to it I will turn you out—the whole lot of you."

But Sister Jeanne is a proud Frenchwoman who was not afraid of the Boche. She frequently put him in his place sharply.

Wezel had foisted on to her a German nurse, Sister Edwige, from the Imperial hospital. She was a worldly nursing sister of twenty-two, while Sister Jeanne had a record of thirty years' hospital service. Sister Edwige was more regular in her attendance at receptions and soirées than in the wards, and Sister Jeanne had to wait late at night for the *Sœur Mondaine* to relieve her. The latter was very easy-going in her habits. She smoked like a trooper and danced and sang in the bedrooms without stopping to think whether the smoke or the noise would disturb the patients. In spite of this, this girl was placed over Sister Jeanne and had charge of the section for venereal cases. This post did not appeal to her for long. After eight months, in August, 1915, she had a violent quarrel with her doctor and told him straight out that she had come to nurse wounded, not prostitutes, and left the hospital, slamming the doors behind her.

Wezel had a mistress, Louise F——, a pretty brunette from Belair who was the terror of her fellow countrywomen.

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

Woe to anyone who had the temerity to displease her ; her powerful lover was always ready to avenge her. She was feared and detested. She used to make herself at home in the hospital and the sisters had to treat this woman with respect and deference, but they did their best to avoid her. Once a lay nurse had the misfortune to be caught smiling at her. The next day she was dismissed and turned out helpless on to the street.

The Kaiser's private physician had also taken on himself the control of public morals. He found it a good opportunity for making a lot of money. The *filles publiques* were all his protégées. In return he was not above accepting little presents which helped their release and the pursuit of their profession.

This confidant of William II. was not fastidious where money was concerned.

This strange interpretation of his duties as a surgeon did not satisfy his greed for lucre. It was not long before he became a member of that class of society that the police watch with special care, and the white slave traffic had no secrets for him. Wezel was to become the tenant of a house of ill-fame.

This so-called *maison de société* was frequented by the soldiers of the invincible German army. Situated as it was near the station, all the troops passing through Charleville devoted to it a part of their short visit, where they met their comrades of the garrison. It was always crowded, and the entrance was blocked in the morning by an impatient band of clients. In the evening the officers of G.H.Q., including even the princes of the Imperial house, met in the drawing-room. For the proprietor it was a gold-mine. The Boche High Command found that monsieur was making too much money, and he was ordered to pay a monthly contribution of 500 marks, which were to be paid to Dr. Wezel. Further, this conscientious staff-surgeon took a small commission on the sale of alcohol in this establishment. In addition to the monthly payment, the proprietor of the *maison close* had to submit to numerous fines for alleged offences against the rules. The whole sum came to more than 12,000



## The Kaiser's Doctor

marks. It was a good windfall for the war chest, but Wezel found it insufficient and he thought that direct control would be more profitable to his country's finances. He, therefore, sought an excuse to turn out the future father-in-law of the Crown Prince. M. Beurier, the proprietor, was accused of hiding a French airman and assisting him to escape. He could not be dealt with by the courts for want of sufficient proof, but it was a good opportunity to get rid of him. His expulsion was decided on and the Emperor's private physician took over the control of the *maison close*. To his ordinary Christian names was added that of Alphonse.

The ceremony of taking over the direction was an impressive one, as at the time of the inventories the doctor came to take over the Temple of Venus. Madame handed him the keys and withdrew.

The *maison de société* was transformed into an Imperial *Pouf* and placed under the Imperial patronage of his Majesty the Emperor of Germany, the immediate management of the Financial Minister and the intelligent direction of Doctor Alphonse.

Every Saturday Wezel paid a visit to the rue de la Gravière to receive the week's takings.

Nevertheless, the control was difficult. Madame the manageress understood how to feather her own nest, and her accounts were not exactly accurate. Direct control did not produce good results. The manageress was relieved of her post and the German administration decided to revert to the old system.

A new tenant was found who had to pay a monthly contribution of 2,000 marks (2,500 francs).

Alphonse, however, still continued his little business in medical appliances at undiminished prices.

As the building in the rue de la Gravière was not large enough, three other houses of the same kind were opened for the virtuous sons of Germany, and Wezel was appointed furnisher by special appointment.

The police in charge of this department found recruiting for their establishments difficult, and they hit on a clever method of obtaining their *personnel*. Unfortunate victims



## **Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters**

of the vengeance of the officers or the police were forcibly interned in these obscene haunts, and when they get back in their own country the German journalists will find here good material for their tirades against the licentiousness of occupied France.

By this pretty profession Dr. Wezel, the private physician and personal friend of William II., accumulated a fortune.

**PART II**  
**THE CROWN PRINCE**



## CHAPTER VIII

### A DESK STRATEGIST

The arrival of a hero.—Precautions against famine.—His bodyguard.—Another Napoleon.—A passing glimpse.—The New Gugusse.—A Death's Head Hussar, who is not taken seriously.—The front has its dangers.—Discretion is the better part of valour.—The best of trenches.—A shattered dream.—Reims and Compiègne still French.—A jolly good fellow.—Summary ejections.—A newspaper office turned into baths.—The Parole.—A great achievement.—General Chanzy under arrest.—A senator made fun of.—Enthusiasm on the wane.—Disrespectful privates.—A general who is too shy. You must salute his Highness.—The *débâcle*.—The last review.—"Good-morning, Kameraden."—Tradition dies—no more goose-step.—The amusements of princes.—Against our prisoners.—After Moreuil, he begins to see things clearly.—Father against son.—"A horse trainer—anything may happen."—Confidences in private.—"We are done for."—A negligible quantity.—The sottish behaviour of the Staff.—A new Iena.—A Hohenzollern wallowing in his own mire.—The father of the Big Berthas.—Strange firewood; princely bowers; gas masks are necessary.—The great disappointment: the wandering Prince.—The first harvest.—The journey into exile.

ON the 1st March the Heir Apparent of the German Empire, William of Hohenzollern—he bore the same Christian name as his father—arrived from Stenay, where he had commanded the 5th Army, to take over the command of the Centre Army Group at Charleville. A few days previously the Villa Renaudin at Belair, which had been locked up by order of the Kaiser, was opened for the Crown Prince, who took up his quarters in this residence, where the Kaiser had stayed before him. He made preparations for a lengthy stay, for his equerry caused ten hectares of the best land in the districts of Charleville and Montcy-Notre-Dame to be requisitioned for his personal use, and a pond to be prepared for 200



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

ducks and geese, as well as a huge poultry farm, where a host of fowls, guinea-fowls and turkeys could multiply at leisure. The cow-shed held ten cows for his suite, and an equal number of pigs were left fattening there. With these resources a prince might bear the worst privations. A Company of the 98th Jäger battalion acted as his bodyguard. His special police watched over his personal safety, aided by a section of the Secret Military Police, stationed at Charleville, for this town was still the official seat of G.H.Q., although William had left it on 16th August, 1916, to go first to his historic castle at Wilhelmsheide, where the Emperor Napoleon III. had been interned, and from thence to his castle at Pless, to superintend the operations on the Eastern Front.

The Sovereign used to come to the Villa Renaudin from time to time, but only on rare occasions on his way to the front, and he never stayed for long.

The Crown Prince had the reputation of being a gay, good fellow, and nobody credited him with any military talent. The people of Charleville were not long in finding this out.

At the beginning of his stay at Charleville, young William might have cut a figure in the eyes of those who believed the official accounts of a servile militarised Press, or who scanned the pictures of the *Illustrirte Zeitungen*, showing the Sovereign and his heir posing for the cinematograph in a "Watch the Dicky-bird" attitude.

One of these pictures in the "Album of the Great War" had made a particularly strong impression on us: one of the Crown Prince in his study.

The young Prince was sitting at a large table, applying his compasses to a map, whilst an A.D.C. stood respectfully in front of him. His abstracted look seemed to be concentrated on some grand plan, his mind was reaching out to vast horizons. Already he saw himself passing victoriously beneath the "Arc de Triomphe" de l'Etoile, and taking possession of the modern Babylon in the name of Germania Virtuous and Invincible.

The photograph achieved a genuine and legitimate success at Charleville. The Crown Prince was already famous and his military reputation had been so far established that the Com-

## A Desk Strategist

mander of the Centre Army Group was honoured with the elegant sobriquet of "Gugusse."

And so the theatrical pose of the Desk-Strategist was received on all sides with a shrug of the shoulders; the son was just as big a courtesan as his father.

This a soldier! Heavens! The good people of Charleville who saw him parading the streets morning and evening every day for eighteen months have something to say about that.

Although he wore the uniform of a General, and on the occasion of a certain military parade flaunted the impressive costume of the Death's Head Hussars, he was never taken seriously either by his officers or by the French of the invaded regions.

There may have been some illusion in the rest of France when the newspapers spoke of the Crown Prince's Armies. Many people may have imagined that, wishing to go down to posterity as a great captain, he lived in the midst of his troops, surrounded by a wise General Staff, and shared the dangers and privations of his men.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Wilhelm, Junior, never got to the front, except by accident, when the Command had prepared a big affair, when success was in sight and when his august presence was required to revive the spirits of the Field-Greys, whose moral sank after each offensive, even if victorious, as a result of the terrible sights of the battlefield and the monstrous sacrifices imposed by Hindenburg and Ludendorff.

On such occasions the Prince went to collect the laurels gathered by his soldiers, still hypnotized by his name. But he was never absent for more than twenty-four hours.

Sometimes he left his château in the evening and returned in the morning, as during the course of the offensive on the Oise. At other times, as during the period of the Somme battles, he went away in the morning, to return at dinner-time. But he never assumed actual command of his armies in the firing-line.

Things did not always go according to plan. Four times between May and July he went off at ten o'clock in the evening to enter Reims, telegrams from the front having announced

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

the imminent fall of the martyred city. Each time he returned without achieving the object he so eagerly coveted, but he never showed signs of disappointment or discomfiture. For the life which he led at Charleville seemed to him preferable to the exertions of camp life.

A similar misadventure occurred to him during the June offensive. He had made all arrangements for departure, in order to take possession of the Château of Compiègne, and had requisitioned a house in advance for his mistress, but in the end he was obliged to re-establish his quarters at the Villa Renaudin, where she lived. His good humour did not suffer in the least ; he laughed and laughed again, and attached only minor importance to military events, as he returned to his cosy little amour.

In short, the Crown Prince only made brief visits to the battle zone. His time was spent at Charleville, in company with his two chief A.D.C.'s, Majors von Muller and von Mulner, the heads of his civil and military establishments, and his faithful police-agent, Klein, whom he nicknamed "The Criminal," and who used to beat up his game.

His Staff was quartered in the Place Carnot, a vast square with ancient houses, the comfort and elegance of which were particularly pleasing to the tastes of the Teuton officers. This square in its *ensemble* was well adapted for the installation of military offices. The General Post Office, which had been temporarily taken over as an elementary school, resumed its former animation, and the telephone worked day and night, bearing the tale of Germany's invincible valour to the four corners of the world. The telephone section was established in a neighbouring house, which had been conscientiously looted beforehand. The inhabitants were immediately expelled from their home ; the furniture suffered the usual removal ; a few antiques, a few bronzes, a few masterpieces of painting started on the way to honest Germany. But these changes were not of great importance, for they took place at each change of authority.

Doorways were opened in the walls of the houses, so as to enable the gentlemen of the General Staff to visit each other without having to go through the street. Sumptuous living-



## A Desk Strategist

rooms were transformed into offices, and offices into living-rooms. The Editorial Department of the *Dépêche des Ardennes* was first a bathroom, then a bed-chamber, and finally an administrative office: a drawing-room, furnished with pieces borrowed from the choicest furniture in the town. The drawing-room and the living-room of the residence of Monsieur Gustave Gailly, formerly Senator for the Ardennes, after having housed the Minister of the Marine and the Admiralty Staff with Von Tirpitz, became the Army Headquarters, where the Crown Prince came every day to dictate his report.

The "Parole," as his report was called, was the greatest military achievement of his Imperial Highness.

He used to arrive every morning at nine o'clock at the Gailly residence in a little blood-red car, driven by himself, the shield of which bore the royal crown as an indication of its high estate. He would enter the big drawing-room, from which had been removed the full-length portrait of General Chanzy, a friend of the family, as well as the marble bust of the deceased senator, which his officers had relegated to the yard, and irreverently crowned with a crumpled top-hat. The Crown Prince would sit unceremoniously on the edge of a marqueterie table, which had been turned into a writing-table, and, lighting a cigarette of mild tobacco, in which he frequently indulged, would bandy jokes with his officers for half an hour or so.

He would then look over telegrams from his army commanders, have the replies dictated by his Chief of Staff, and then, serious conversation being at an end, he would take a drive round the town before lunch, whilst his Majesty's troops were being slaughtered far from their chief, for the glory of mighty Germany and her dangerous sovereign.

The same kind of comedy took place at three. The Crown Prince used to look over the communiqué from Headquarters, then return to his château, not without having arranged beforehand a little demonstration on the part of soldiers, who stood in front of the offices of the General Staff and hailed the Heir of the Empire with "Hochs" as they had been ordered to shout. But this fine enthusiasm did not last for ever. During the last months, especially after the June and July



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

offensives, the Field-Greys, massed in the Rue Carnot, showed by an icy silence their eagerness to see the futile butchery come to an end as soon as possible. This coolness on the part of the men increased from September on ; the groups of soldiers became a less and less frequent sight, and respect diminished as the Boche retreat on the Belgian frontier became swifter. Many neglected to salute him, and we were then able to realise the change on Sunday, the 29th September, at half-past nine in the morning.

The Crown Prince was coming back from making his report, and, followed by his car, was walking down the Rue de Moulin at Charleville, on the way to his villa. On the same side of the street, but in the opposite direction, came three soldiers, fresh from the front. Instead of giving way and saluting, as directed by military regulations, in France as well as in Germany, the three Field-Greys took up the whole breadth of the pavement and obliged the Crown Prince, a General of the Infantry, and Commander of a whole group of armies, to step aside and make way for them. Instead of the military salute they gave a jeering smile.

We were expecting an explosion of anger, as had occurred on several occasions of a similar kind, but what was our surprise to find that this almighty chief, though red with shame, did not make the slightest protest against such a breach of the regulations.

This wave of insubordination had been growing evident for some time past, for the General Staff of the lines of communications had on several occasions been obliged to put up posters in order to remind the men, and even the officers, of the marks of respect due to his Royal and Imperial Highness the Crown Prince.

The first of these is dated 5th April, 1917. Here is the text of the order issued by the *Kommandantur* :

### “ ORDER OF THE —TH KOMMANDANTUR

“ In view of the presence of his Imperial Highness the Crown Prince of the German Empire, at Headquarters in Mézières-Charleville, I direct, through the medium of the

## A Desk Strategist

garrison report, that the honours shall be paid by officers, officers of the Veterinary and Hospital Corps, military employés, as well as by non-commissioned officers and privates, by facing directly the Crown Prince.

“ Headquarters, Mézières-Charleville, 5. 4. 1917.

“ COUNT ARNIM,

“ Major commanding the Lines of Communications.”

These reminders remained a dead letter, and from September, 1918, we of the invaded regions clearly perceived the crumbling-up of German discipline and the beginning of the final débâcle. In October the German transport fell back in a disorder which boded most happily for us. The German army was marching towards Belgium as fast as it could, ragged, worn-out and sullen; it was already a rout.

One of the military distractions of the future Kaiser was, on leaving the offices, to bestow Iron Crosses on soldiers who had been awarded them. This little ceremony took place without any parade. A company of infantry did the honours. The prize-winners were massed in the Place Carnot, he pinned the decorations on them, offered them a cigarette, said a few banal words of congratulation, and then returned to more tender occupations, about which we give interesting details further on. He very seldom held reviews; parades used to tire him.

On one solitary occasion, in September, 1918, he inspected in the Place Ducale a regiment of Pomeranian Grenadiers, which was to leave for the front and of which he was the Honorary Colonel. The companies were reduced to fifty-five men. The Prince passed rapidly in front of the men, using the prescribed formula in addressing each unit: “ Good morning, comrades.” To which the Field-Greys in turn replied: “ Gruss Gott, Kaiserliche Hoheit ! ” (“ God give you greeting, Imperial Highness ! ”) He ended the review with a hasty address to his troops.

Black prisoners were another amusement for our Imperial idler. Thirty-seven Senegalese, or Algerian *tirailleurs*, captured during the Aisne offensive in 1917, had been placed at his disposal. At first these unfortunate prisoners of war had

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

served him as playthings. He had their hair done up in eight faultless tufts and took them about with him in turn, in his car. His great delight was to make them sweep the streets in this guise. He photographed them himself, both in undress and without any dress at all, and these documents, which he carefully preserved, were not the least glorious of his military career.

These wretches were badly treated by their guards, and deprived of nourishment. The people of the city, moved by pity for these brave soldiers who had been captured while defending the country, tried to pass them eatables and tobacco. Unhappy they who yielded to these promptings of their heart. They were driven away with the butt end of a rifle, and heavily fined.

The *Kommandantur* approved of the brutalities of the Boche soldiers and issued the following notice, under the date of 15th May, 1917 :

“ Since 13th May, a certain number of prisoners (African) have been interned at Charleville, and are being used chiefly for the cleaning of the streets.

“ To-day the following incident occurred :

“ As the prisoners were being marched from their quarters to the Base Hospital, some women rushed towards them, and tried to kiss them, holding out their children to them, throwing flowers upon them and into their hands.

“ These facts, which are incompatible with the maintenance of discipline and order, oblige me to warn the population that, as a consequence, I shall immediately arrest any inhabitant who endeavours to approach prisoners and enter into relations with them, and I shall punish him in exemplary fashion, without respect of persons.

“ COUNT ARNIM,

“ Major Commandant.

“ Headquarters,

“ 15th May, 1917.”

However, he foresaw the logical conclusion of events, and we have grounds for believing that he made himself the protagonist of peace offers, which were scornfully rejected by the



## A Desk Strategist

Quartermaster-General. Young William did not insist, and from that time on he had no voice in counsels of a military nature.

Here is the story, according to information from a very reliable source : the Crown Prince, after the action at Moreuil, and the defeat before Amiens and Calais, realizing that victory was daily slipping out of the grasp of Germany, unsuccessfully proposed, in a conference said to have been held in April at the Château Renaudin, at which Hindenburg and Ludendorff were present, to make offers of peace to the Entente, granting very large concessions to France. Now, the Heir Apparent was staying at the same Château of Belair in October of 1918. A stormy discussion took place, and the son reproved his father with having led Germany to its ruin and his dynasty to its fall by his blind ambition and his refusal to consider a reasonable peace.

He always expressed his opinions to the persons he honoured with his friendship, and he never disguised his fears for the future. This anecdote is a proof of it :

The Crown Prince was a very good horseman, and possessed a magnificent stable of fine thoroughbreds.

A lady, who was accorded full liberty of speech, in return for certain services she had rendered, once congratulated him on his excellent equestrian qualities.

In a joking tone, but one veiled by a certain sadness, the Prince replied : " Well, it is always handy to be able to ride ; who knows if I may not be glad to be a horse-trainer one day ; anything may happen."

And then, after a few moments of silence, he added, in a hollow voice : " What is going to become of me ? I can't go back to Berlin, either as victor or vanquished ! "

To one of his officers, rather indiscreetly, perhaps, he also confided his fears, and concluded : " It's no use hiding the fact ; we're done for."

He did not conceal his anxiety from his mistress, Gabrielle Bernier, although he never disclosed anything of a military nature to her. Nevertheless, in moments of expansion he often told of the plight of the German armies. Even after the first big offensives, which were shattered each time in their



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

impetuous onset, the final outcome did not inspire him with much confidence ; but after June he had no more illusions, and when, on 15th July, the *Stoss Truppen* (the shock troops) were held in check by the splendid *poilus* of Gouraud, and, on 18th July, Mangin developed his offensive, according to the mathematical plan of Foch, the young General-in-Chief took no trouble to disguise his thoughts. Like the doctor who follows the progress of a malady step by step, the Crown Prince noted day by day the progress in the military science of our famous Marshal, and realized ever since the month of April that defeat was inevitable. And so he was not surprised at the débâcle of November. He had been expecting it for three months. It was the only time he showed any signs of foresight, and his dispute with his father was the outcome ; but not for a single moment did he entertain the idea, or have courage enough to plunge into the inferno and die at the head of his troops.

The Crown Prince was no longer regarded as an authority in the military circles in which he lived, and Ludendorff considered him an absolutely negligible quantity. The Heir to the Crown did not inspire Hindenburg and his Quartermaster-General with the respect which was required by a strict code like that of the Hohenzollern Court. Whenever he addressed them it was to beg a favour, and even then he was not certain of getting what he wanted. He found himself in the same predicament when the command of the First Army was transferred from Valenciennes to Charleville, and when the Inspector of Lines of Communications established himself there, in the person of a real Boche brute, Lieutenant-General von Heydebreck, who made the French population feel the weight of his heavy German heel, the Prince had no more influence with him than his junior subalterns, and Heydebreck did not hesitate to disregard the Crown Prince's requests, if he did not consider them regular or sufficiently justified.

The Crown Prince was only a nominal commander of his group ; the real head was General von Schulenburg, his Chief of Staff. This officer was considered a soldier of some merit, which did not prevent him from finding the French Generals more than a match for him. The two aides-de-camp of the

## A Desk Strategist

Prince, von Muller in the military affairs, and von Mulner for the civil establishment, were policemen in uniform, rather than orderly officers. They followed him at every step, and watched his least gesture. He protested against this intolerable surveillance, but could not gain his point. His officers had established their *casino* (as the Boches used to call their mess) in what used to be Bethmann-Hollweg's Chancellory. No incident of any interest took place there. The Crown Prince often went to take his meals with his officers, amongst whom the most solid drinker was Major von Lena, Commandant at the Prince's G.H.Q. The major used to drink until his orderlies were obliged to carry him back to his quarters dead drunk. He found a worthy partner in the Prince of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, the father-in-law of King Manuel. The German reverses could not allay their thirst, and one day when Sigmaringen was a guest at the *casino*—the German armies were already retreating—he was so drunk that next day he was found lying on the floor of his room, wallowing in his own excreta. (One must have an eschatological pen to be able to describe these people.) The Crown Prince's Staff included not only drunkards, but thieves. The following fact will serve as proof :

In the spring of 1918, his officers wished to celebrate the Somme offensive and his birthday together, by giving a banquet to "his Highness." They did not consider the electro of the *Casino* elegant enough to receive such a guest. They made a search in the houses of the rich for dinner-services and plate. The appointments were splendid, but after the banquet neither silver nor dinner-services found their way back to their lawful owners. Their new owners sent them to Germany. The dinner-service, engraved with the name of a leading Charleville citizen, was found in the canteen of one of them.

The Staff of the Crown Prince remained at Charleville till Tuesday, 5th November, four days before the relief of the town by the French. Amongst Schulenburg's officers was Major von Beck, Commander of the "Big Berthas," who was inconsolable at the thought of not being able to bombard the fortress of Paris any more.

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

¶ Their departure was well worthy of Germany. Innumerable convoys carried away the pieces of furniture which had been stolen here, there and everywhere. The private residences in the Place Carnot were to a large extent stripped bare. The rich furnishings of Madame Gustave Gailly's house, the quarters of G.H.Q., had mostly disappeared. The offices of the *Dépêche des Ardennes* had been rifled. Magnificent drawing-room pieces had been sawn up as firewood, and the rooms had been transformed into a veritable plague-spot. When Guillaumat's *poilus* wanted to establish the Vth French Army's Bulletin there they shrank back in horror, and they were almost forced to use their masks to fight against the poisonous gases of the latrine. The Boches had left their cards behind them.

It seems that the brother-in-law of King Christian of Denmark left Charleville with regret. His residence at Belair was only handed over to the municipality on 7th November, 1918, at four o'clock, less than two days before the entry of the French into the town. At that same hour the Prince himself had set out for Belgium.

His General Headquarters Staff left for Vielsam (in Belgium) on the 5th; he joined them there two days after. His stay there was not very long, for almost immediately after his arrival he fled to Holland.

A special carriage had been prepared at Charleville station to take him with his luggage and his furnishings, but the rumbling of the revolution was already audible, and, on the 6th, mutinous soldiers burst open the carriage and set about looting systematically.

After that he was interned on the Island of Weiringen. His mode of life there is well known.



## CHAPTER IX

### PRINCE OR CLOWN

The Crown Prince courts popularity.—A rather cold reception.—A studio turned into a reception room for ladies.—Favours that pay.—The Prince's preference for French bread.—His passion for French girls.—"Write to me at 'La Friture.'"—A post-card of value.—Stolen wine is not fit to drink.—The tact of a great Prince.—Caligula and Poincaré—"Salute his Highness!"—The resistance of the population.—The anniversary.—Souvenirs of the Ardennes going cheap.—"For the Crown Princess, if you please."—French humour.—First visit of the Crown Prince to the town hall.—"Give us coal."—His father's son.—"I am doing my best, but I am not the master."—Free advertisement.—A friend of France.—"I never wanted war."—Second visit to the town hall.—A music-hall turn.—The monkey and the prince.—Silent meditation; the Crown Prince is descended from a monkey.—"Give us our hostages."—The French Government is to blame; it persecutes the Alsatians and treats German prisoners like swine.—A Frenchman's dignified reply: "France has always been the land of chivalry."—"I'll ask old Hindenburg."—Peace in the offing.—"You can never impose it."—The hostile French Press.—"Long live the King, down with the Republic."—Why an Emperor is better than a President.—The company of children.—A game of marbles.—Obstacle races.—"Cigarettes, Crown Prince."—As at Waterloo.—He inspects the schools.—The capture of Berlin.—"God bless you, your Highness."—A visit to the shops: the way to get rid of him.—A warrior in lace.

**A**LTHOUGH the Crown Prince was one of the most enthusiastic authors of the war—a fact, however, which he always denied with superbly affected indignation—he bore no responsibility, as we have seen by his rôle in military matters, for the decisions of the Boche High Command, which led to the crushing of the mighty German army: so little attention did they pay to him at Headquarters.

He prepared to court popularity in his residence in the occupied regions by playing the part of a benevolent prince to the French, whose country he had invaded.



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

At Stenay, when he was in command of the 5th Army, he had tried to rouse interest in himself and gain sympathy by a series of little services. He also made frequent visits to Sedan, and would have liked to thrust his company upon certain old families, who showed by their undisguised coldness how little they cared to receive such an undesirable guest.

The man was hungry for advertisement. That is why, before establishing his headquarters at Charleville on 1st March, 1917, he had made careful arrangements to be preceded by a reputation for simplicity and generosity.

While he was still in command of the army at Stenay, he paid frequent visits to Charleville, either to appear at the General Staff, or to have his portrait painted by one of the painters attached to his august person, for he was very anxious to hand down his features—unprepossessing though they were—to posterity. Two artists rejoiced in his special favour—a Munich professor called Adam, who had taken possession of the house of A. Damas, a well-known painter, who had died prematurely. The other, Schutze-Gerlitz, had first occupied a little summer-house on the estate of M. Edouard Prévost, which his brother, M. Eugène Prévost, a talented painter, had turned into a studio. The Crown Prince would often betake himself there, not only to have his elegant silhouette put on to canvas, or his historic bust shaped in marble, but also to receive there such charming ladies as were anxious to behold at close quarters the divine features of a future Emperor of Germany. On his way there he lavished smiles and salutes, but he did not get much in return for his amiability; the ladies whom he honoured with his princely gallantries laughed loud and cried out in amusement: "There's the idiot going by!"

He had replaced his father at the Villa Renaudin. Like the Kaiser, he was an early riser. During the summer season he used to take a sun-bath in the park of the estate. It was then permissible to gaze upon the princely torso, which, clad only in a pair of cotton pants, disported itself on the lawn.

In this practice he was rather more modest than the officers of the Staff of the 1st Army at Rethel, who also gave themselves up to the caresses of old Sol in the very heart of the town. These did not show the same discretion as their chief,

## Prince or Clown

for they exhibited themselves entirely naked on the balconies of their quarters, and drew the attention of passers-by, especially of ladies, by their shouts and cries. A colonel of the Staff was even a past-master in this species of exhibition.

As soon as the Prince arrived at Belair he granted certain privileges to the inhabitants, especially to the farmers of the district, whom he exempted from some of the requisitions imposed on other communes, especially from requisitions of milch cows, on the condition, however, that the farmers, in selling their produce, gave precedence to German officers, soldiers and civil servants. The result, of course, was that this measure of exemption was worthless, for, once the Boches were served, the population of Charleville, except for a few specially privileged persons, and invalids supplied by the Municipal Dairy, never saw any milk at all during the Crown Prince's stay, apart from the occasional distribution of condensed milk, provided by the American Relief Commission.

The Crown Prince detested German bread. He used to have his bread made by a local baker, asserting that French bread was infinitely superior to "K.K." bread, and it ended with his refusing to eat any other. In all his habits of life he tried to give himself a French cast. With his cap aslant, he used to take long walks through the village, which he no doubt considered a fief of the Crown, chatting familiarly with the peasants and the labourers, especially with the women, and more particularly with the girls, in an academic kind of French, without any accent whatever.

Everybody he met he would invite to apply to him in case they needed assistance. He assured them he would stop at nothing to help them.

For instance, he took steps on several occasions to issue passports to those who wished to return to uninvaded France by repatriation trains; it was enough to be young and pretty to be sure of his favour. Unfortunately his influence did not carry much weight, either with the police or with the Inspector-General's Staff; for a good many people who had based all their hopes on the intervention of the Prince were bitterly disappointed when the lists of the repatriates came to be published. However, he was anxious to show his goodwill, as he

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

said, to M. Pailliette, Member of the Municipal Council, in particular.

This gentleman the Prince met in the Rue Forest, where his stables were located. Unable to avoid him, M. Pailliette was obliged to listen to his conversation :

" You don't know me," the Prince protested. " You consider me an enemy to France. Nothing is further from the truth. I love the men of France more than any other people ; I love the women of France still more, in spite of all the obstacles in my path. Look how they have torn me from my love ; it has caused me deep sorrow. People don't seem to consider the feelings of the heart when it comes to princes. We are always sacrificed to the exigencies of policy.

" That is why I want it to be known that people may always write to me. Only they must not bring their petitions to the house in the Place Carnot " (the office of his Staff) " nor to the *Kommandantur*, for any personal letters addressed to me by the people and left there never reach me. They must take them to Madame Claudet's, at the ' Friture ' ; she will forward them to me directly." (This conversation has been recorded in the Municipal Archives.)

The " Friture " is a shady inn in the outskirts of the town, at the foot of the hill on which stood the Crown Prince's villa. It was here that the gay ladies of Charleville used to give their rendezvous during the war to the gallants, French or German, who undertook to relieve the monotony of their life under the occupation.

The Crown Prince was a daily visitor at this establishment, which was also known as the " Café du Barrage," and relished the company of the special kind of habitués he met there. He even had his photo taken on horseback in front of " La Friture," with the sign hanging proudly above his slender, elegant figure. This photograph, popular in the form of a picture post-card, had a great success as a curiosity.

He would often enter into conversation with the people at the tables, and sometimes he condescended to drive with them.

He was interested in the visitors of the house ; he would ask them details about their lives, and he always came back to the same *leit-motiv*, that the war was idiotic (*sic* !) and that he pro-



## Prince or Clown

tested with all his might against the accusation that he had provoked it.

He was lacking in tact at times. The following incident is an example. It was during the first days of the May offensive. The Chemin des Dames had been carried by a surprise attack, and his armies had crossed the Vesle in the direction of Château Thierry. Young William was not at the front, the post was too dangerous. He preferred to stay at his headquarters at "La Friture" and evolve the plans for a campaign of love-making with his lady Chief of Staff. At "La Friture" he happened to meet some of the habitués with whom he had already exchanged conversation.

"I have very sad news to announce to you," he told them. "My soldiers have stormed the Chemin des Dames; Fismes has fallen, and my victorious armies are marching swiftly on to Paris. The one good thing about this triumph of our arms for you French is that peace will soon be signed and we can become good friends again."

"That remains to be seen," said one of the party dryly.

The Crown Prince did not carry the conversation any further.

The attacks of the French Press used to irritate him. The *Matin* had spoken of him as a "Caligula," and he was very hurt about it. He confided his resentment to a person he used to meet on his walks.

"Your Press," he told him angrily to his face, "certainly doesn't try to humour me. Have you heard how the *Matin* has spoken about me?"

A gesture of ignorance.

"Well, I'll tell you, it has called me 'Caligula.' Do you know what kind of man Caligula was?"

"Yes," answered his involuntary companion, "if I remember my Roman history aright, Caligula was a Roman Emperor, a débauché who went raving mad and was assassinated."

"That's the man, and yet I am not a Caligula."

A few moments' silence, and then the son of the German Cæsar continued excitedly: "I'd like to find a nickname for Poincaré. What can I call him?"

"Call him Cicéron," retorted the Frenchman, who had a weakness for puns.



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

“ Why Cicéron ? ”

“ Because Cicéron is not carré ! ”\*

“ No, I’ll think about it, and when I’ve found a good name, I’ll let you know.”

But the Crown Prince did not find it, for he never made known the sobriquet he was so anxious to fasten on the President of the French Republic.

At the beginning of his stay he made efforts to obtain attentions from the invaded population, and he lavished smiles and salutations upon persons of both sexes whom he wished to honour with his salute. But, apart from the microcosm of prostitutes, who saw an amorous carpet-knight in young William, no one responded to his advances. Whence the anger of the Prince, who, in the spring of 1917, published an order through the *Kommandantur* that the male population should salute the future Kaiser as well as all officers and civilians of the Administration, whenever it met them on the street, and that it should step aside from the pavement to make way for them, under penalty of prosecution.

And so, on 7th April, 1917, the municipalities of Charleville, Mézières and Mohon received the following notice :

### “ NOTICE

“ The long duration of the occupation and the daily contact between soldiers and residents have given rise to a certain nonchalance in the attitude of some of the civil population. For this reason, I am issuing the following Decree for the District of the *Kommandantur* of the Lines of Communications comprising the towns of Mézières, Charleville and Mohon.

“ The civil population is to be careful not to block traffic by standing about in the streets.

“ Residents of the male sex, above twelve years of age, are required to salute, by doffing their hats, all officers and

\* *Translator's Note.*—The pun is on the words Cicéron (Cicero), which in French might mean “ Cis is round,” and Poincaré, which might mean “ not square.” Cicero’s name (suggests the Frenchman) would do, because “ Cis is round ” (Cicéron), it is not square (Poincaré).

## Prince or Clown

civil servants holding the rank of officer in the Army and Navy of Germany and the Allied States.

" Civilians are required to step aside politely in the streets to make way for officers and civil servants as specified above.

" Any breach of this will be punished by a fine not exceeding 150 marks, or by imprisonment.

" Headquarters of the Lines of Communication,

" April 5th, 1917.

" COUNT ARNIM,

" Major Commanding."

The municipality protested against this humiliating insult, and its representative, M. Léon Pailliette, observed to Count Arnim :

(1) That in France the civilian population is not accustomed to salute French officers in uniform, unless personally acquainted with them.

(2) That it is very difficult to distinguish between the ranks of the German army.

(3) That a salute imposed by force would be no guide to the feelings of the inhabitants when saluting officers whom they did not know, and for whom it would be difficult to feel personal sympathy.

(4) That it would be painful in the extreme for persons of advanced years, or persons holding a certain position, to salute youths on the ground that these were officers.

Count Arnim admitted M. Pailliette's logic. He stated that he was not the originator of the decree, that he had, on the contrary, even protested against its terms, but that he had been obliged to bow before a higher authority, the Crown Prince's Staff, to wit, and obey.

All of which did not prevent Arnim from making himself a police agent and passionately hunting down delinquents. These measures did not disturb the male population, however. They resisted the decrees of the *Kommandatur* and kept out of the way of this new Gessler.

A preliminary warning, with a threat of severe punishment, reached the town hall on 5th May, 1917. Other notices

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

were published ; there was a flood of fines ; brutes were found to apply the lash to delinquents. It made no difference. Except for a few timid souls the majority of the Charleville population managed to avoid saluting his Highness and the officers. It should be realized that in this affair, as in numerous others, the population stood firm by their policy of discreet but patriotic opposition.

In the meantime the municipality was called upon to furnish statistics as to the resources of the city. Here again the Crown Prince and his *Kommandatur* did not have their way. The municipal council showed them more than once that it would not take their orders.

In this connection a significant incident occurred on 1st May, 1918. The Crown Prince's birthday fell on 5th May. In order to commemorate the historic date the officers of the *Kommandatur* were going to give a present to the Crown Princess Cecilia, who expressed a wish that the souvenir chosen should be something connected with the Ardennes. Her Majesty's loyal subjects spared no pains to earn the thanks of the Princess. And so, for 6th May, 1917, Arnim's minions discovered in the library of M. Henri Faure (President of the Charleville Chamber of Commerce) an artistic edition of the "Ardennes Illustrées," by M. E. de Montagnac, a very rare work nowadays.

This book, they thought, would look well in her Highness's library. So the volume was promptly dispatched to Berlin, and M. Faure, on his return, did not even find a note of requisition.

In 1918, the *Kommandatur* wanted to make the municipality participate in the Crown Prince's birthday celebrations against its wishes. On 1st May, Appens, a non-commissioned officer and Arnim's factotum, appeared at the town hall and announced his master's kindly intentions.

His officers, he stated, were thinking of sending the Kaiser's daughter-in-law a souvenir of a distinctly artistic nature, associated either with the history of Charleville or with the traditions of the Ardennes. The price was not to exceed 300 marks. He asked the municipal council if it knew of any collections where objects of this kind were to be found.



## Prince or Clown

The council replied to the effect that the town did not possess anything which would satisfy N.C.O. Appens, nor did it know the value of the collections in Charleville. Moreover, if there had once been artistic collections in the city they would now be no more than a memory, as a result of the numerous searches and requisitionings of copper objects, *objets d'art* and furniture.

As for a "souvenir connected with the history of Charleville," it added amidst smiles, "there were the public monuments and amongst these the 'Combat des Coqs'" (cock-fight) by the Charleville sculptor Alphonse Colle, a bronze group of two young wrestlers which had been set up in the square by the station and which William II. had often admired.

The "Combat des Coqs" was a work of great merit and worthy of a place in the most famous galleries. There were other works of art at different places, amongst others the patriotic monument erected to the memory of the men of the Ardennes who had fought for their country in 1870-1871, and the statue of Bayard, the knight "sans peur et sans reproche" who had saved Mézières from the Imperial troops in 1521.

All these monuments would have excellently suited the intentions of the *Kommandatur*, but the relentless requisitions of copper had passed that way, and the only statue left in Charleville was that of Charles de Gonzague. The removal of that would have been a pretty difficult task, as the Crown Prince had put it under his lofty protection.

Herr Appens laughed sourly and left with the remark that he would make a search and easily find what he wanted.

We do not know what souvenir was finally sent to the Crown Princess, the *Kommandatur* not having seen fit to inform us.

These were not the only relations between the municipal council and its princely guest, who would have preferred the council itself to make the first advances. On two separate occasions it came into contact with him when he thrust himself on its attention. However, it tried to ignore him, but this attitude did not suit our desk strategist, and since the



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

municipality would not come to him he made up his mind he would go to the municipality.

On 10th December, 1917, at 11 a.m., a figure in the uniform of a German General appeared in the council chamber of the municipal council and was received by the president, M. Achille Blairon, a veteran of 1870 who pretended he did not recognize his visitor. He asked whether M. Blairon was the Mayor. M. Blairon replied that he was the president of the voluntary municipal council which had undertaken the difficult task of administering the city in the absence of the elected representatives. The stranger then expressed a desire to speak to the president in particular, but M. Blairon then objected that if it was not a case of a personal affair he himself could explain the object of his visit to the members of the permanent council who were present.

Hardly had the distinguished visitor entered the council chamber before he began to complain of the cold, and the president remarked that the scarcity of coal, due to the few deliveries made by the German authorities, imposed a very severe economy on the municipal council. If he desired to be warmer all he had to do was to send some fuel. It would be welcome.

The officer then took up the conversation.

"When Headquarters was installed at Charleville," he said in his well-known nasal tones, "my father gave orders that Charleville, Mézières, Mohon and the neighbourhood should enjoy a more privileged régime than the other occupied districts."

At this point M. Blairon pretended to recognize the German Crown Prince and saluted him as such.

"Accordingly," continued the Crown Prince, "your life has been less hard than in the other towns, and when Headquarters was transferred to Germany and I came to settle in Charleville and took over the command of my army group, I wanted to follow my father's example and try to secure the same privileges for the three towns as they enjoyed in the Kaiser's time.

"Appeals and petitions reach me from all sides. I always listen to them and try to give satisfaction. Unfortunately

## Prince or Clown

I often run up against the Inspectional Staff for the Lines of Communications, and you know that the Inspectional Staff and the First Army are not the same thing as Headquarters. They have made quite a reputation for themselves in the zone of operations. The French population must have realized the difference of régime. That is why, whenever I wanted to defend the interests of the natives, I often came into collision with the Inspectional Staff and did not always succeed as I should have liked. I even wrote to my father, as well as to Marshal Hindenburg, to ask for an exception to be made in favour of the three towns, but I did not receive the answer I wanted. His Majesty could not grant my wishes, for, in spite of the fact that I am Crown Prince, I am only a plain General, after all, whereas the Inspectional Staff is the supreme organization in the country of the First Army, and I have to submit to its decisions just like anyone else. An Army Commander is all-powerful within the limits of his own army. He can authorize or prohibit as he likes, whereas the commander of a group of armies must not interfere in the administration of his armies. And so my rôle consists in directing military operations and the movements of troops (?). When I was in command of the Fifth Army at Stenay I did what I wanted, and I don't think the inhabitants of that little town had any reason to complain of my stay there.

"In short, I want you to make it known amongst the inhabitants, that I sympathize with them, that I am always ready to consider any matters which may be brought before me, and that if I don't succeed each time, it is not my fault, but the fault of the organization behind the lines."

The young Crown Prince would have been glad if the municipality had made known his good intentions to the people. But the president replied that such publicity would be useless, for his visit would soon be known throughout the town. In any case the people would show their gratitude to the Heir Apparent more willingly if his benevolence were to express itself in deeds rather than in promises and words.

This dignified tone was not at all to the taste of this clown, who hungered for advertisement. A repatriation train was just starting on its way to uninvaded France, and he insisted

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

above all that he should appear before the French on the other side of the lines in the guise of a good Prince. That is why he added :

“ I am always ready to consider your demands, if they are within the limits of my power, for, I repeat, I want the people to know what I am trying to do for them. A repatriation train is going to leave shortly, and it would be particularly pleasing to me if the repatriates were to make known in unoccupied France what my feelings are towards their compatriots in occupied France.”

The president of the municipal council profited by this show of kindly disposition to put before him the desiderata of the inhabitants.

“ You will permit me,” continued M. Blairon, “ to put before you other grievances, and I shall ask you to do your best to facilitate our task and avoid any needless friction. You are right, the Inspectional Staff is not the same as Headquarters, and we are sorry it isn't. Headquarters gave us credit for all our efforts to administrate the town amidst conditions often very delicate, as well as for the unfailingly dignified and correct attitude of the population. How many difficulties were avoided thanks to the courteous relations between the municipality, the Préfecture and the *Kommandatur*. But things are not the same now. We go to town wondering what brick is going to fall on our heads. Fines are showering on us at all moments, and that for the most trivial reasons.”

The Crown Prince again promised to intercede, then he repeated his intention of pleasing the inhabitants and his desire that this should be known in Charleville and throughout France. And he concluded :

“ They represent me as an enemy of France and say that I tried to bring on the war. It is a ridiculous slander. I never wanted war. I was only a supporter of those who wished to organize the army for Germany's defence. That is all I wanted.”

As no one replied to this vehement diatribe, the Prince did not insist and left the municipal council.

Young William visited the town hall for the second time on December 31st, 1917, when a new repatriation train was



## Prince or Clown

under steam, and when the German authorities had started to take hostages and send them to the hell-hole in Miljegany, near Vilna.

On that day he appeared in the council chamber of the municipal council, accompanied by a civil policeman and five superb greyhounds, which he took delight in making jump over his leg.

It should be added that, at his residence in Belair, he possessed a fair sized monkey, which together with his women was one of his main amusements in the country. Its name was Dingo, and he had made a play-room for it in one of the concrete rooms built as a protection against air attacks. A special heating apparatus had been installed, to protect the animal against the inclement weather of the Ardennes. As amusement he had put at its disposal the wardrobe of the Maison Renaudin, which had been left behind. In fact it is known that a part had been borrowed or distributed by his suite.

The Crown Prince would often fall to musing in the presence of his favourite monkey, and after seeing his own reflection in the mirror would ponder over Darwin's theory.

We must ask the reader to pardon this digression, but the greyhounds' frolics tempted us to draw the picture of the monkey palace of Belair.

The president of the municipal council thanked the Prince for having kindly lent a favourable ear to the grievances of the municipal council, on his last visit.

Seeing that he manifested such kindly sentiments for the inhabitants of Charleville, he would take the liberty to bring to his notice the painful impression created in the district by the taking of hostages and the threat of a demand for women hostages. He described the consternation of all the families at the end of this sad year, and he appealed to the consideration which he had shown in different cases, to interest the Heir Apparent of the German Empire in the miserable plight of our unhappy fellow-citizens.

The Crown Prince replied that the German Government had indeed made a hard ruling, but that it had been necessitated by the reluctance of the French Government to exchange the



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

Alsatians interned in France, and that it was to oblige France to modify its attitude towards the Germans held in the French concentration camps, who, according to the Crown Prince, were treated like swine (*sic*).

"At Reims," he added, "they even tore medals from captured German officers."

"You will permit me, your Highness," retorted M. Blairon, "to express my surprise that such treatment could be meted out to prisoners of war in France, and to doubt the veracity of such reports, until proofs to the contrary are forthcoming."

"As you observed just now to one of my colleagues, facts often reach the ears of chiefs intentionally distorted by subordinates who are interested in mangling the truth."

"That in the heat of battle and amongst the horrors of bloodshed, the soldier descends to excesses, is an act of passing madness, whose excuse is the intoxication of the fight. But that a Frenchman deliberately and in cold blood will indulge in acts of cruelty, that I refuse to believe. The Frenchman is always generous in his feelings, and considerate towards the unfortunate."

"Beneath our exterior, we of the Ardennes may be brutal at first, but at heart we are kindly disposed and can pity the misfortunes of our neighbours."

The Crown Prince was silent. The council profited by the occasion to bring up again the question of hostages.

It demanded insistently that he should release the hostages from the Ardennes as the German authorities could not accuse them of any malevolent act during the occupation.

If, however, the orders of the military were inflexible on this point, the council begged him to exert his great influence to relieve the women of the terrible prospect of being deported to Germany.

The Crown Prince replied that he would do his best to prevent the deportation of women, and even, if it were possible, to improve the condition of the men hostages. With this object, he would telephone to "old Hindenburg" (*sic*); in any case, he advised them not to be discouraged, for the pourparlers that had been begun were not broken off as yet, and he was even in hopes they would lead to a satisfactory conclusion.

## Prince or Clown

He then dealt with certain questions relating to female labour. But he changed the conversation and embarked on political subjects. He announced that the war would end soon and that in three months peace would be signed. We were present at this interview and quickly retorted :

“ Do you think so ? ”

“ So it's not your opinion,” replied his Highness. “ Why not ? ”

“ Because you can never impose peace on us.”

Changing the conversation, he launched on a violent diatribe against the French Press, which he accused of being the cause of all the miseries of the war. He next sang the praises of the monarchical form of government, saying that he could not see why France was a republic, and that it would be much happier under a good king than under a president.

“ The king,” he declared, “ is the father of his subjects ; he looks on the State as his family. He takes the same interest in them as in his own children, and nothing happens to them, fortunate or unfortunate, that does not give him either pleasure or pain.

“ A president, on the other hand, has only one object : to court popularity with a view to securing his re-election. That is why he scatters millions broadcast amongst journalists—so that they may sing his praises. The president is only a representative functionary, without any responsibility, and not, like the king, an executive power who accepts all the consequences of his government.”

“ I understand your point of view,” replied a municipal councillor. “ You preach on behalf of your own saints. And you defend the rights of the king because you belong to the profession.

“ As far as we are concerned, you will permit us to remain loyal to the form of government which we have chosen of our own free will.”

This councillor, M. Pailliette, then brought the conversation on the subject of the difference between the mayors elected by universal suffrage, who, being re-eligible for office every four years, cannot elaborate large municipal programmes, and the professional mayors in Germany, who are nominated

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

by the Government and need not worry themselves with the fluctuations of the ballot and can initiate and execute plans in the interests of the city.

With these assertions the Crown Prince's visit came to an end. Just as he was leaving the council, he asked if they had liked the concert given in the Place Ducale on the occasion of the Kaiser's visit, a few days before.

As no one replied (for good reason), he praised the acoustic qualities of the Place Ducale and departed.

His intercession with "old Hindenburg" bore no result except that of preventing the women of Charleville from being deported as hostages to the camp of Holzminden. The men hostages did not obtain the same favour; on 7th February, 1918, they left for Russia, in Siberian temperature, in carriages without any heat, and there, in the camps of Miljegy and Bloock-Roon, they suffered the terrible martyrdom of hunger, cold and Boche brutality.

These were the only relations the municipality had with the Crown Prince; after that date he never appeared at the town-hall of Charleville. It was a strain for him to play a serious rôle as befitted his rank for any length of time. He preferred the company of street-children and genial ladies whose intimate manners appealed to him far more than respectable people.

From the day of his arrival he won the sympathy of the young urchins of Charleville by taking part in their frolics. One day he would throw them a handful of coins and delight in watching them scramble for the coveted mark. Another day he would play at marbles, and loved to be watched as a skilful player by his out-at-elbows, down-at-heels partners, who always treated him with no respect.

We have seen him in the Place Carnot, enjoying himself with the youngsters of a neighbouring school, jumping over the sand-heaps brought to scatter over the square, where in order to encourage his invincible warriors, the Kaiser's eldest son used to distribute Iron Crosses in profusion.

He would start off first with his greyhounds, jump nimbly over the obstacles, and then organize races for the youngsters. The winner would receive a mark from his august hands.

One of the chief amusements of this eccentric Group Com-



## Prince or Clown

mander was to scatter prodigally exquisite Oriental cigarettes amongst these little ragamuffins, who did not wait to be asked to taste of the forbidden fruit. In this way he acquired an important following, which hung close to his heels whenever he appeared in the streets.

How many times did the members of the municipal council witness the spectacle of a band of fifty to sixty young urchins pulling the Prince by the sleeve or by the edge of his tunic and shouting at the top of their voices: "Cigarettes, Kronprinz, cigarettes!"

One would have thought it was a masked figure at Carnival time followed by the jeering crowd of cheeky children. Very often the number of the mendicants would increase, and in order to escape from the over-urgent clamours of his little protégés, "Gugusse" was obliged to seek asylum in a shop, where a shop-girl without instructions would save him from an excessive popularity.

Sometimes, if the Prince was less liberal than usual, the procession of children would loftily express its dissatisfaction. We were able to see for ourselves one day. The Crown Prince had turned a deaf ear to all entreaties and was not very liberal. His customary clients, losing their temper, shouted after him with energy the immortal word of "Waterloo,"\* which they coupled with his Imperial title.

When he was in a bad temper, facetious Willie played the moralist. For instance, one day he summoned the head master of the boys' school at Belair, so as to order his pupils not to smoke.

"The remedy is simple," said the teacher. "Don't give them any more cigarettes, and they won't smoke."

Many *bon mots* are quoted from the lips of children who met his questions with French repartee.

One day, in the Place du Moulinet, he made a boy shout: "Down with England," for two marks.

The youngster submitted, but once he had the promised coin in his hands, he ran away at full speed and shouted from

\* *Translator's Note.*—One of Napoleon's generals, on learning that the day was lost, gave an ejaculation which has remained classical but unprintable.



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

a distance : " Eh, Kronprinz, *Vive la France*, down with Prussia." His Highness smiled, he had no bitterness.

At that time, owing to the lack of coal, the classes were assembled in one room, under the supervision of a single master. It contained pupils of all ages. After visiting the school, he took it into his head to question the scholars on the history of France and chose as period the reign of Napoleon. The attendance at class was irregular, for various reasons : the youngsters were often absent for the numerous food-lines, or in order to bring in their provision of wood from the forest. The more or less ignorant pupils who were present gave him poor answers. It was a great joy for the Imperial inspector to sing the praises of the Boche schoolboy and to prove his superiority over his French comrade. " All little Germans have history—even the history of the world—at their fingers' ends."

One last answer, however, cooled his enthusiasm. In answer to a question asked by the master about the campaign of 1806, the youngster, after having mentioned the victories of Iéna and Auerstaedt, told of Napoleon's entry into Berlin and explained how the Burgomaster handed over the keys of the city on a silver plate. The benevolent inspector was caught. He never repeated his interrogations or his scholastic visits ; the example of Charlemagne did not tempt him again. Not that he considered himself beaten. The following month, in June, he asked the head master, M. Blanchemanche, if the boys had a German class. On receiving an answer in the negative, he sent out an order that German should be taught to every pupil who could read and write. The result was that the school attendance fell off still further.

The Prince also found that the school children did not know how to give greeting in German. His private secretary sought out M. Blanchemanche a month later and gave him a new order from the Crown Prince : to show the children from that day on, how they were to say Good-morning to the sovereign of Belair. This was the formula that had to be used : "*Gruss Gott, Kaiserliche Hoheit*" (" God bless you, your Imperial Highness ").

And the malicious youngsters sneezed each time, irreverently, on the passage of his Highness.

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## Prince or Clown

The company of the Charleville street urchins was not the only amusement of the august idler. He also used to enjoy visiting the town shops, where he noticed pretty shop-girls.

Every day, after making his report, he would take a walk through the cheap shopping centres, stopping at the windows. As soon as a pretty face met his eyes, he would go in without any ceremony, and without asking whether his company was agreeable or not. He would start a conversation and often stay for hours, not caring to realize that his presence kept customers away, and that the sales-girl would prefer to see him go. The best way to get rid of him was to press him to buy. It was a most effective stratagem, especially when the objects for sale were of a high price. He would disappear and never come back again.

He was rather niggardly in his purchases. For Christmas, 1917, he sent toys to his children. It didn't ruin him. He had chosen dolls or soldiers' suits at just over a shilling.

In this way his Imperial Highness the Crown Prince of the German Empire whiled away his days. He did not have time to go to the front to encourage his valiant soldiers, who, for their part, began to find that the war had lasted long enough and were soon to show how they felt in a way that boded no good to the reign of the Hohenzollern. The heir to the Crown had other cares. He wanted to be a hero after his own style, and sit to Georges D'Esparbés as a model for a new episode in his *Guerre en dentelles*.

## CHAPTER X

### THE SON-IN-LAW OF M. BEURIER

Aiming at immortality.—An easily pleased Don Juan.—French aviators salute the Crown Princess.—“Wash-bowl.”—The Grand Duke’s tour of inspection.—A new deer park.—A lady major-domo.—The Chemin des Dames.—Queering Dr. Wezel’s pitch.—A strange case of fisticuffs.—Sentenced to go back to his wife.—The story of a medallion.—The son-in-law of M. Beurier.—An exquisite idyll.—Love at first sight.—Like a schoolboy.—“You will yield, or else . . .”—Princess of the Bar Sinister.—*Scripta manent*.—What a diligent seeker found.—From Bagatelle to Sans-Souci.—True love.—“We are beaten.”—“You are the only person I love.”—The Shock Troops.—The vanished plans for the July offensive.—Aviators in distress.—A romantic abduction.—Anger and despair.—A gilded prison.—A policeman-thief.—The Prince as looter.—Last effusions.—An Algy.—Help the “little darling” in her need.—The value of French money.—*En route* for Holland.—The flight to Ninove and the retreat from Verviers.—Rise and decline.—A faithful lover.—His mania for writing.

**D**ESK-STRATEGIST and clown, these are the two aspects under which we see the man, who, but for the defeat of the Germanic hordes, would have become the very powerful Emperor of Germany.

His love of histrionics went so far as to put up in the Lycée Sévigné at Charleville, which had become the Crown Prince’s hospital, a monument dedicated to his glory. On a column of Givet granite was placed a medallion in white marble, showing the august profile of the royal degenerate. Hindenburg was not without his imitators!

At this point our task becomes more delicate. We have to lift the veil from part of the young Prince’s private life and reveal him to the public in the guise of a Don Juan.

The Kaiser’s son had arrived at Charleville, not with the

## The Son-in-Law of M. Beurier

romantic halo of a young lover, but with the reputation of a connoisseur of easy pleasures, fully satisfied even by the most ordinary adventures.

At Stenay he had left behind him the reputation of a none too delicate rake. The Crown Princess had, meanwhile, arrived to console him in his rustic isolation, but an indiscreet visit by French aviators had driven her, together with her fickle husband, into the cellars of the château, and cured her once and for all of any desire to move into occupied France. That is why the Villa Renaudin did not have the honour of welcoming her, nor Mme. Claudot, the notorious hostess of "La Friture," of making her acquaintance.

His escapades at Stenay had already brought him into evidence. He had requisitioned the country house of the estate of Presles, in the canton of Carignan (Ardennes), in order to devote himself to his orgies. The chalet was in an isolated position, and secure from prying eyes ; it suited him in every way. He had come there in the company of an officer whom the people of Stenay had christened by the graceful name of "Wash-bowl."

The tale of his escapades on the Meuse had reached our ears, and rumour further attributed to him some rustic amoretti in which the Heir-Presumptive had bestowed his favours on some young country-girls, whose heads were turned at the idea of attracting a patron of Imperial blood.

We soon saw that the gossip which circulated about his doings was not exaggerated. In fact, hardly had the gallant Crown Prince reached Charleville before he began to sow his wild oats under the very eyes of the public. Together with the old Prince of Schönburg-Lippe, one of the chiefs of the aristocratic Auto Corps, a drunkard, whose special prowesses had won for him, as is known, the title of "Old Roué," he made a close inspection of the Charleville battalions. The lowest of women stood a good chance of becoming his favourite for the moment.

Several of them were under the control of the Watch Committee.

One girl, whose Christian name sounded sweet to his Germanic ears, and who had already been the delight of the



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

Staff Officers and their orderlies, as well as of the lively manager of the *Gazette des Ardennes*, held his attention for some time. However, this genial lady, who professed but little respect for his Revelling Highness, and often used the title of "Old Blackguard" to designate her princely friend, did not remain at court for more than a few months. After having frequented the low cabarets of the little town, with her boon companion, after having roamed about the dark streets on noisy night excursions, singing and promenading at hours when all civilians were supposed to be at home, the poor creature tasted the bitterness of disgrace.

In order to receive his lady visitors, the Prince had selected an elegant residence, enjoying a splendid view, from which his father delighted to gaze upon the country round Charleville and the valley of the Meuse. This he transformed into a Boche deer park. The house must have pleased his artistic temperament, for it contained paintings of great value. Unfortunately, the Boches had passed that way before him, and the furniture of the rooms in which he spent his hours of intimacy was of a rather crude kind. Not that he was dissatisfied. After all, war is war.

As president of this establishment, he made the acquaintance of the ineffable Mme. Claudot, his confidante, errand-woman and lover. Mme. Claudot was entrusted with special missions; one day she would be a messenger of love, bearing perfumed *billets-doux* from her Imperial friend; another day she would be the major-domo of his pleasures. And so the daughters of joy always passed through the "Friture" before arriving at the new Sans-Souci. A special path had been carefully prepared and covered with sand so as to lead directly to the place of assignation, without passing through Belair.

Now, "La Friture" belonged to a secluded portion of Montcy-Notre-Dame called Waridon. It is situated in the heart of an ancient seignorial estate which bears the prophetic name of La Folie. It is from La Folie that the secret path starts, and it received a name full of glorious associations for the valiant warrior, for ever since it has been known by the significant title of Chemin des Dames.

He never received women at the Villa Renaudin, and he

## The Son-in-Law of M. Beurier

remained deaf to all appeals to do so. His two A.D.C.'s, who kept a close watch over him, would not have allowed it; they had their orders.

The amorous campaigns of the Boche Caligula did not always come off. He even met with some misadventures. The most famous was his altercation with the Emperor's private physician, Dr. Wezel.

Dr. Wezel, as the reader learnt in the chapter devoted to him, possessed a mistress to whom he was genuinely attached.

The Crown Prince singled her out the very first day of his arrival in Belair. He immediately resolved to make her acquaintance. His "criminal," the agent Klein, was instructed to seek an audience and to advise the young lady that his august master would appear that very day at five o'clock. The prospect of this visit threw both mother and daughter into consternation, a fact which Dr. Wezel noticed when, just a few minutes before the arrival of the Prince, he came to see his mistress as usual. He made inquiries, and when he heard the reasons for their agitation he asked his sweetheart to withdraw and undertook to receive the royal visitor himself.

A stormy interview took place. From words the two passed to action: challenges were exchanged.

The incident was noised abroad. It was impossible to keep it from the Kaiser, who, as punishment, sent Wezel to the front for two months, and the Crown Prince to his legitimate wife for twenty days. The heavier sentence was the Prince's.

He was attracted by all the women and girls whom he met, and he tried to enter into conversation with them.

But this kind of life only half pleased this respectable young man. Family life suited his temperament better.

That is why the Don Juan from beyond the Rhine resolved to enter upon a more serious alliance. In the summer of 1917 he became the son-in-law of M. Beurier. Emile Augier never dreamt that there would be such a pendant to his immortal masterpiece.\*

\* *Translator's Note.*—*The Gendre of M. Poirier* ("The Son-in-Law of M. Poirier") is the name of a well-known French comedy by Emile Augier.

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

M. Beurier is the owner of a special establishment in the Rue de la Gravière, at Charleville, which bears a street-mark of considerably larger dimensions than those of the neighbouring houses.

Soldiers on leave, dilatory revellers, could always find amusement there after closing hours, at fixed prices.

M. Beurier is also the father of an exquisite brunette, who was soon to become one of the heroines in the history of respectable Germany.

In praise of M. Beurier, be it said that, in spite of his profession, he was absolutely unaware of the intrigues which elevated his daughter to the position of a favoured Sultana. Quite the contrary: he did all in his power to avoid any such honour, but the will of a great prince is all-powerful. He was obliged to give way and submit to the importunities and persecutions of his illegitimate son-in-law.

Nay, more: having concealed a French aviator, he had been arrested a few months earlier, and then summarily ejected from his establishment, not before paying many fines and being replaced in his house by Dr. Wezel, the Kaiser's private physician, as mentioned in the preceding pages.

This touching romance began with a tender idyll. In September, 1917, the Crown Prince was on his way to report at the Place Carnot, in his usual car, when, coming from "La Friture" on to the Meuse embankment, he beheld two ladies, one of whom arrested his attention. He passed in front of them again and again. Finally, plucking up courage, he alighted from his car, and, bearing in mind the scene in *Faust*, timidly accosted the two ladies.

He asked the younger one details about her life and her address, chatted politely with her, and then jumped gaily into his car, and raced away to G.H.Q., about which he had entirely forgotten, turning back several times and waving adieux. It was a case of love at first sight. The next day his ambassadress appeared at the house of the young lady, who lived with her sister in the Boulevard Gambetta, and gave her a letter. This intrigue lasted a fortnight. The Crown Prince behaved like a regular schoolboy. Every day he used to write passionate letters which his official envoy duly de-



## The Son-in-Law of M. Beurier

livered, but the fair one did not always respond to the tenderness of her royal wooer. The patience of the latter began to wear out, the letters changed from tender to threatening; the last one, in fact, frankly declared that if the young lady, who had been singled out for the honour of becoming a great prince's favourite, did not crown his desires, she would bring severe reprisals on her head; she herself would be deported to a camp in Germany, and her father attached to a civilian labour battalion.

The next day, Klein, his policeman-pimp, sought her out, and took her to the Sans-Souci in Belair. When she came back, the Kaiser's son did not need to use threats again. Gabrielle Beurier had become the second Crown Princess.

An Imperial Highness, in spite of the bar sinister, she could hardly remain in her old apartments. Her exalted patron transferred her to his own surroundings, and in so doing wasted neither time nor money. Non-commissioned officer Appens discovered a little house, furnished and ready for occupation, in the Rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The Prince visited it, liked it, and the fair Gabrielle was ordered to take up her residence there. She submitted to the will of her royal lover, and abandoned her family, in order to enjoy the favours of the Kaiser of to-morrow. Only on two occasions, however, did he go to visit her. He preferred to receive her in his own villa, which he had had arranged so as to suit his own fleeting desires. Usually it was in the afternoon, sometimes at dinner-time, less often at night, for his two bodyguards watched him closely and did not allow him to sleep out. They acted as if they were really his warders.

The Crown Prince had been weak enough to write letters, which might have been used against him after the war. It was necessary to obtain possession of these at all costs. To accomplish this Von Müller and Von Mulner had recourse to a machiavellian device.

The pretext under which the Beurier family had been ejected from their so-called house for social gatherings came in very handy. The two orderly officers pretended that Gabrielle had been mixed up in the affair, that she possessed correspondence with French agents, and that, as a result, she herself



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

was under suspicion as a spy. The letters of the Prince were found and immediately confiscated. The favour of her influential patron saved her from prison. She could congratulate herself on escaping so easily. The trick had succeeded. The poor creature, free from all malice or evil designs, who did not really care much for the Kaiser's son and had yielded to him through fear as much as weakness of will, had not for a moment thought of putting in a safe place documents which might have been of the greatest use to her later.

This state of things continued till April. Young William found that his favourite was too far from his palace. And so he resolved to bring her nearer to him, and the indispensable Appens, furnisher of bachelor's apartments in war-time, was called upon once more. He had the right kind of nest, all ready at hand. A pretty little summer villa stood on the top of Montcy-Notre-Dame Hill, not far from the "Friture." Its owner had asked some months previously to be allowed to return to Charleville, but permission had been withheld. It was a favourable moment. The occupant was told to look for quarters elsewhere and move out as soon as possible.

A police-officer escorted Gabrielle Beurier to her new dwelling. A motor truck, by order of the *Kommandantur*, removed the furniture at the Rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau ; and a new honeymoon began in a new setting. Bagatelle was close to Sans-Souci.

The two turtle-doves saw each other more regularly and more often now. Almost every afternoon the "little darling" would walk up the Chemin des Dames. There she would find her "big boy" (these were the names the lovers gave each other), and in this way plans for a Franco-German Alliance took a tender shape. Sometimes he spoke to her about the war. He did not conceal from her that they were beaten and thoroughly beaten, and that he had no illusions about the future. He would never be Emperor of Germany. He had resigned himself gaily to his fate, and the only thing he regretted was that after the war he would not be able to stay with his sweetheart. Ah, if he were only able to stay in France after peace was signed, how gladly he would have accepted the situation. But alas ! it was only a beautiful

## The Son-in-Law of M. Beurier

dream which would never be realized. He even opened his heart further. He complained bitterly of state and dynastic reasons which force princes to marry against their inclinations, and to take to wife princesses for whom they feel no attachment. He even embarked upon insinuations which we cannot repeat, as we have no desire to drag in third persons, who knew nothing about the orgies of this crowned Lovelace.

Let not the reader think we are exaggerating. Such conversations were repeated to others, and if the Prince's confidante, the lessee of "La Friture," cared to talk, she could furnish ample subject-matter for the scandalous tale.

The Crown Prince had achieved the height of his desires. His painter-in-ordinary, who shared his pleasures, sketched the delicate features of his darling; and he himself photographed her in alluring *négligés*, and his joy would have been unbounded but for the clouds which cast their shadow over the young couple's happiness in the summer of 1918.

Several scenes of disorder at Charleville had created uneasiness in German military circles.

During the month of June, a performance in the Municipal Theatre at which the Crown Prince was present had given rise to a scandal. Soldiers from the front were in the pit, whilst Boche women, who had come to replace the orderlies, secretaries and other "shirkers" who had been dispatched to the firing-line, occupied the boxes, sitting ostentatiously with Staff Officers. The sight of the fair-haired Germanic maidens roused the fury of the Field-Greys, who could not forgive them their monopoly of easy jobs, whilst they were being uselessly slaughtered in the name of the Fatherland.

Shortly after some regimental officers picked a quarrel with their colleagues from the Staff of the First Army.

A few days before the July offensive, a detailed plan of the operations which were to lead the invincible army of the Crown Prince in a few days to Paris, was lost. It had been left behind at the Villa of Sans-Souci, and no trace could be found of it.

To crown these misfortunes, at eleven o'clock that night, a motor defect brought down two French aviators, who started looking for repairs at Nouzon in the middle of the night, and were caught in the early morning of the next day.

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

All these incidents annoyed G.H.Q., and the officers of the Staff, whose behaviour had given grounds for complaint, were called to Verviers to explain themselves before Ludendorff.

In order to excuse themselves, they stated they were only following the example set in higher quarters. The Kaiser insisted on clearing up the mystery, and summoned his son. The truth emerged, and a few days before the July offensive, after a visit of the Crown Prince to the Empress, it was decided to send away his light-o'-love. In spite of his mother's insistence, the Prince firmly refused to see his wife. The Police Commissioner of the Armies in Lille was entrusted with the task of seizing the girl.

The trick that had obtained possession of the letters was employed afresh. Gabrielle Beurier was accused of espionage for a second time. It was said she had stolen the lost plans. For form's sake, a search was made. She was also accused of having entered into relations with the recently captured French aviators.

Her deportation was not effected without energetic protests on the part of the Crown Prince. He posted sentries at the four corners of his estate to prevent her abduction, and he came to blows with his physician, whom he accused of aiding and abetting the kidnappers. It was a lively squabble, and the desperate lover sent the doctor downstairs a good deal quicker than he had come up. However, negotiations were entered into, and finally the Crown Prince consented to part from his beloved.

On the 28th of July she was taken by car to Liart, and from there, in a reserved carriage, to Lille. By order of the *Kommandantur* she was interned in an apartment in the Rue Berthelot, which she was forbidden to leave. Here she stayed three weeks. She was then transported to East Flanders, to the Château of Hoverbulaer, near Grammont, where she was subjected to the same close surveillance, for she was only allowed to go out once a month in the company of a policeman, who had been attached to her person.

The reign of a favourite thus has its disgraces. At Bagatelle she had not been allowed to receive any visits, not even



## The Son-in-Law of M. Beurier

from her father or mother, and this gilded captivity continued to the day of the Armistice.

The deportation proved a blessing for one person. Klein, the policeman, whom the Crown Prince jokingly, but justifiably, used to call his "criminal," was fascinated by the furniture of the villa. As soon as the young girl had left for Lille he hastened to send it to Germany on his own account.

The Prince was inconsolable. A story is even told in this connection, which we believe to be true, but which we submit with reserve, not having been able to check its authenticity ourselves.

Some days after their forced separation, young William, we are told, wished to see the dear deported at all costs, and confided his plans to his trusted chauffeur. It was arranged that the Heir-Presumptive should disguise himself as an automobile driver, and that the shield of the car, bearing the Royal crown, should be cunningly painted over.

But as the Crown Prince was afraid of being pursued by Staff Officers, instructed to prevent him from finding his "little darling," the ingenious chauffeur showed him how easy it would be to keep them back by smashing certain parts of the motor.

According to the tale told us, he actually carried out his plans, but the police were freed from the necessity of pursuing their chief, as they had already been informed of what was going on.

It was a pity. A Prince in the rôle of a *saboteur* is distinctly something out of the ordinary.

In the midst of his sorrow, he tasted one supreme delight. During his stay in Lille, his beloved mistress was authorized to come and stay two days at the Villa of Sans-Souci.

It was their last interview, and touching it was, for they were never to see each other again. Only his favourite chauffeur was to bring news of her health. And so ended the idyll which had begun so auspiciously.

Did the Crown Prince's behaviour give rise to stringent financial measures which did not allow him to continue the monthly allotment of 3,000 marks that he had promised to make to her Morganatic Highness? Or did the state of the



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

German Budget exclude any generous grants on the civil lists of the Kaiser's family, and prohibit a generous settlement of the Crown Prince's love affairs? Or was it the notorious stinginess of the Hohenzollerns which came into play? What is certain is that the heir of William II. applied to his new father-in-law, M. Beurier, for money. He even used threats to gain his ends.

On the first occasion, some days after the departure of Gabrielle, a messenger brought the old tenant a letter from his son-in-law, reminding him that, like a provident father, he had announced his intention of giving his daughter a dowry of 50,000 francs, and asking him to pay out this sum at his earliest convenience, so that it might be forwarded to the person concerned. Very much astonished, as he might well have been at such a demand, M. Beurier replied by the following letter :

"When you allowed us to see our daughter before her departure, I asked her if she needed money. She replied that she had enough for her needs, and asked us not to worry on her account, as she had a reserve.

"I have never told anyone that she had 50,000 francs, but, out of my personal account, I have set aside for her 10,000 francs, which will be paid her when she is of age. But if she should need money in the meantime she would only have to drop me a line, and I should do my best to send her the amount.

"I am, your Imperial Highness,

"Respectfully yours,

(Signed) "BEURIER."

The poor man's trials were not at an end. On another occasion he was summoned at eleven o'clock at night to "La Friture," to learn from the Crown Prince's lips that he was to pay 20,000 francs for the girl's support. Trembling with fear at the prospect of the vengeance which might be visited on them, the parents meekly said that they could not find such a sum at the moment.

Other police methods were employed, though in vain, to ascertain the investments of his Highness's father-in-law.

## The Son-in-Law of M. Beurier

They held out, and so time passed till the 6th of November, the day preceding the Prince's departure—an event which must have been very painful to him, so sorry was he to wend his way back to Germany and leave a country with so many tender associations, a country which, as we have seen above, he pretended to love as much as his own country.

The Beurier family hoped to have done with the troubles which the Kaiser's son had brought upon their heads, when, on the afternoon of the 6th, a messenger from Belair, again Mme. Claudot, brought an autograph letter from the Prince. Her orders were to communicate the contents and bring back the letter without delay.

However, the missive remained long enough in the hands of those concerned to be copied in its entirety.

This letter, the copy of which actually passed through our hands, ran as follows :

“ SIR,

“ Please give bearer the sum of 10,000 francs, in good French currency (so as to facilitate its exchange abroad), for the needs of our dear girl (*sic*).

“ Best wishes.”

For signature there was only an initial, but the writing was undoubtedly in the Crown Prince's hand. The father-in-law remonstrated. He firmly refused to answer such a demand, and the next day the vanquished Prince sorrowfully took the road to exile.

Some weeks before the Armistice, Gabrielle Beurier had been released from her prison and sent to Holland, by order of her lover, under the escort of one of the Secret Police of the 1st Army. But at Ninove she was able to leave her luggage in a place of safety and escape from her guard. She fled to Verviers, whence the order for her expulsion from Charleville had been issued, and remained in concealment there, under an assumed name, for seven weeks. It was only on the 15th of November, the day of the Allies' triumphal entry into the former headquarters of the General Staff, that she resumed her identity.

Since then she has returned to her paternal hearth, where

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

she helped to manage the establishment, and welcomed our *poilus* with the same smile which she had once reserved for the quondam Prince. What a fall was there !

But the ex-Crown Prince had not forgotten her. On 14th January, 1919, Mme. Claudot received a postcard in the handwriting of the man who, but for the Allies' victory, would have been Emperor of Germany. On this card, the handwriting of which has been authenticated beyond a doubt, the exiled Prince asked for news of his darling, and instructed his confidante to convey her his good wishes.

This card was signed "Your Big Boy"—the familiar name by which his beloved companion usually called him.

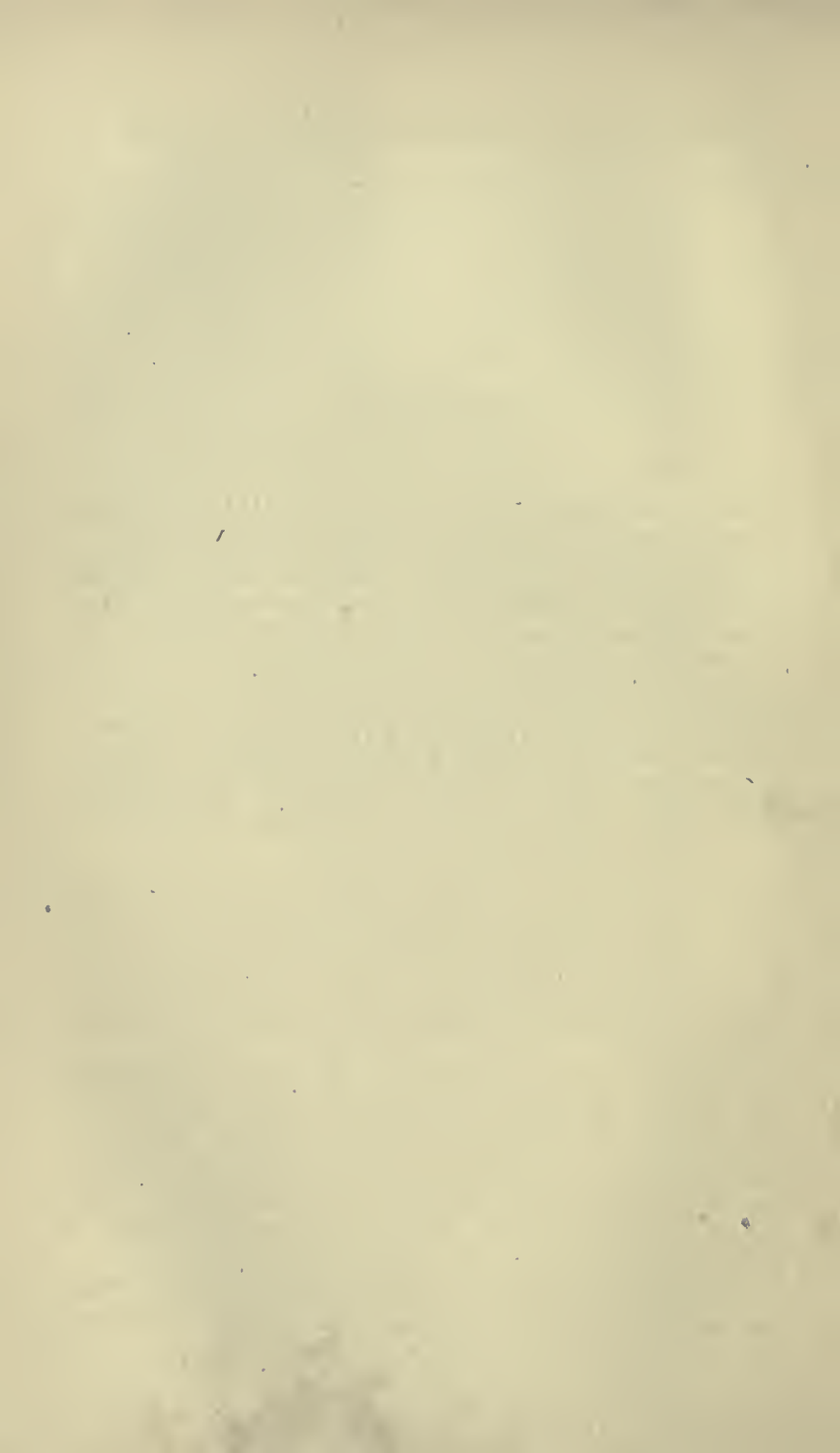
Three days later a new card reached the same address, on which his Highness again inquired after his darling, and asked mine hostess of "La Friture" if his old favourite was in need of assistance, and he concluded by asking whether it was practicable for him to continue corresponding with her.

Such is the fine fellow whom we set out to describe. The reader will admit that he is hardly calculated to increase the glory of that family of brigands whose crimes for four whole years terrified the world !

The father—a murderer. The son—a rake. What a family !

## PART III





## CHAPTER. XI

### THE "GENERALSTAB" (THE GENERAL STAFF).

A formidable war machine.—A brilliant idea of the elder Moltke for dominating the world.—A very exclusive body.—But Foch reveals himself. . . . —Face to face with disaster.—An incompetent: the grand-nephew of the great man.—The disgrace of the Marne.—Reasons of health.—The man who insulted the *Wackes* at Saverne.—A lover of walks.—The walking-stick which served as a barometer of the war.—The day's report.—The consequences of Verdun.—Rumania as a punishment.—The idols of the people.—Rapid advancement.—The real dictator.—An over-rated reputation.—William suspects Hindenburg.—The colossus with the feet of clay.—The Quartermaster-Generals.—The departments of the General Staff.—The Boche Boscharth.—Bayard's Cup.—Disappointments and apprehensions.—Revolution thunders from afar.—Spa decorated with flags.—The Red Flag at G.H.Q.—A sorry return.—The grain of sand does its work.—The lies and pride of the Germans are the causes of their defeat.—The murderer of Germany.

THE General Staff is the formidable war-machine which, from Luxemburg, Mézières, Kreuznach and Spa directed the operations of the German armies on all fronts. It corresponds to the G.H.Q. in France, especially from the time that General Foch assumed sole command of the armies of the Entente.

The General Staff was a brilliant idea of the elder Moltke, and was the chief factor in the German victory of 1870. On the morrow of his triumph and the formation of the Empire, he worked away industriously at preparations for the next war with France, which was to bring about the final crushing of the hereditary foe and the complete domination of barbarous Germany over the whole world.

The German General Staff was a very exclusive body, which only admitted the élite of the officers and the cream of Teutonic

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

aristocracy. The entrance examinations for the Academy of War, their chief military school, were extremely difficult, and the double stripe of amaranth in the breeches ranked those who wore it among the military aristocracy, and made them the envy of their regimental comrades. The General Staff was the executive brain of the army, which prepared its work of destruction in silence, and anticipated the war down to its smallest details. It was the most highly perfected machinery in the military organization, and its effects would be devastating as soon as mobilization allowed it to function regularly.

Proceeding directly from the Emperor, it stood above the Ministry of War, whose duties were confined to administering the army, without concerning itself with the elaboration of plans for future campaigns. The General Staff drew up the military conventions which bound the States allied to Germany, prepared the regulations for recruiting personnel, and fixed the amount of the grants necessary for the maintenance of the army. All the Ministry of War had to do was to apply the decisions of the Staff ; it was, more or less, the subordinate of the first Quartermaster-General ; the Kaiser was automatically its chief. No step was taken in the war of 1914-1918 that was not studied, weighed and decided by this remarkable organization, which had been mobilized, more or less, for the last forty-four years. It started from the humble Brigade Orderly Officer and culminated in the great chief at Berlin, who held in his hand the wires which could set nearly ten million soldiers in motion, and who made them respond to his touch like an accurate machine, and sent them light-heartedly to death for the greater glory of the Fatherland.

However, the smallest grain of sand could disturb the machinery, and the Boche, foreseeing to the point of excess, but slow-witted, and narrow, was incapable of swift initiative. It was necessary for him to revise, reconstruct, multiply equations, and finally lose time. The grain of sand dislocated the springs, threw the command into disorder, and the assurance of victory became the most startling and crushing defeat ever recorded in the annals of the world's history.

Foch, by his genius, which one is tempted to say would have

## The "Generalstab" (The General Staff)

been the envy of the unsurpassable Napoleon, had overcome the cunning wiles of Hindenburg and the bold strokes of a Ludendorff. The German army, finally and decisively beaten, was, on November 11th, 1918, a mere body without a soul, a chaotic horde of panic-stricken refugees, ready to lay down their arms and surrender unconditionally; in one word, a corpse in full process of decomposition.

Hindenburg knew it. That is why he pressed the German delegation to accept the clauses of the Armistice without discussion. He hoped in this way to avert what would be an irremediable catastrophe, namely, the complete destruction of the Kaiser's armies, once invincible, now powerless.

The future will decide whether the Armistice of the 11th of November was not premature, and whether it would not have been preferable to crush the demoralized troops of Ludendorff in the strong grip of the Entente, who had cut off their retreat on the East.

Not being a military critic and confessing ourselves unable to judge a matter as complex as the science of war, we leave it to those better qualified to judge and give a decision.

On the declaration of war, General von Moltke, the grand-nephew of the famous von Moltke, who forty years ago prepared the defeat of France, was at the head of the General Staff. This post he held against his own wishes, for he knew well that he did not possess the qualifications for directing such an organization, nor the strength of character to assume its heavy responsibilities, and shortly before the outbreak of hostilities he had asked the Kaiser to relieve him of his command. But as he bore an historic name, and as that name might make a strong impression on the enemy, William considered him to be the right man for this important post, and kept him there. Then came the war. The German army marched on Paris, after violating Belgium's neutrality and invading the North of France. But it met with an obstacle, the battle of the Marne crushed the hopes of the sovereign, and he did not dine at the Elysée on the appointed day. Moltke, who had been obliged to obey his orders, was made the scapegoat, and sacrificed. However, as the German people had not been informed about the defeat of its army nor



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

instructed as to the real reasons for the retirement of the Chief of Staff, the latter resigned his post on grounds of health. As a matter of fact, his health had really suffered as a result of his big disappointment, and the grand-nephew of the great strategist died during the course of the war.

He was replaced by the Minister of War, General von Falkenheim, who had already acquired publicity by his attitude at the time of the Saverne incident. As Minister of War, he had upheld young Baron von Forstner, who had insulted the Alsatians and was killed later on the Russian front, and the Colonel of the 99th Regiment of Infantry, von Reuter, who, by making common cause with his lieutenant, had come so near to provoking a serious revolt.

He resided at Mézières from September, 1914, to August, 1916, and occupied the private apartments of the Prefect of the Ardennes. The new chief of the General Staff was a man with rather a good figure and a genial, ruddy face. He had a liking for walks, and he could be seen every day on the roads near G.H.Q. The inhabitants used to consider him a barometer of the war by the way he carried his cane. When he carried it in his right hand, his face beamed. That day the bulletins from the front were unfavourable for the native population. If the stick was in his left hand, the General seemed annoyed. Then a smile would spread over the face of the French: the news must be good. Falkenheim's fortune consisted of a long list of debts, and he lived from hand to mouth. When he assumed his new duties, the Kaiser allowed him a large sum of money, appropriated from more or less secret funds, in order that he should settle part of his debts.

Each day, punctually, at noon, the representative of the Staff was closeted with the Kaiser and discussed the results of the operations in the presence of the Chief of the Military Establishment.

On February 21st, 1916, like a thunderbolt, came the big offensive at Verdun which was to crown the Crown Prince's military career, but which cost the armies of the Central Powers so many sacrifices and obtained such insignificant advantages. It was the work of Falkenheim, whom the Germans never forgave for this bloody fiasco. It was generally said that with

## The "Generalstab" (The General Staff)

the troops at his disposal he should have attacked another part of the front. He would then have stood a better chance of success and the war would have ended sooner. His critics reproached him with having carried on the offensive too long, and so causing useless losses. It was also said that Falkenheim, after ten days' fighting, had realized the impossibility of success, and that he should have stopped the attack after the first unsuccessful onset.

The failure at Verdun lost him the confidence of the Kaiser, who relieved him of his duties. He put him at the head of a group of armies, which after the declaration of war with Rumania took the field against this nation. He was more fortunate than at Verdun, and, after his victories, we did not hear any more talk about him. Up to the day of the Armistice he was at the head of a group of armies on the Eastern front, where his inactivity met with severe criticism.

Till then, the Eastern front, where Hindenburg was in command, had been practically independent of the Chief of the General Staff. When it was decided to withdraw one of the two unsuccessful generals of Verdun, the Kaiser resolved to place the Eastern and Western fronts and all the allied fronts under a unified command, which was entrusted to Field-Marshal von Hindenburg and his lieutenant, the Infantry General Ludendorff, absolute idols of the German people, who had placed all their confidence in them.

On the mobilization of the army Hindenburg had been unattached, while Ludendorff at the same time was in command of a brigade at Strassburg. These two personages were not so well known in Charleville, where they only made short stays.

After Falkenheim's departure, the Kaiser had left the Ardennes, and G.H.Q. was at Pless in Silesia, where Field-Marshal von Hindenburg had stayed before his transfer to Kreuznach. Ludendorff exercised a strong influence on military and political affairs at home. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, von Kühlmann, was dismissed by the Kaiser in 1918, at the express desire of the First Quartermaster-General, for having declared to the Reichstag that Germany could not win the war by force of arms alone.

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

Von Kühlmann was summoned to G.H.Q., where he met with a more than cold reception. Violent discussions took place between the Kaiser, the Minister and Ludendorff, and the unfortunate Secretary of State was not even asked to the Imperial table, in accordance with etiquette.

Ludendorff's reputation was attacked by certain German Generals, who claimed that his military value was overrated, that he was incapable of any great plan, and that credit for his knowledge should go to one of his staff subordinates, Colonel Bauer, whom they considered a real soldier.

The relations between Hindenburg and William were officially very cordial, but in private the Kaiser and his Chief of Staff could not bear each other. The proud Hohenzollern was jealous of the popularity of his immediate subordinate and suspected him of ambitious designs which aimed at nothing less than the overthrow of the dynasty and his proclamation as Dictator. He kept him at his side, however, for the people obliged him to do so, and he did not possess either the strength or the authority of preceding years, to break down all opposition and impose his will.

During the offensive of 1918 the influence of Hindenburg diminished, the Emperor was pushed into the background and the star of Ludendorff shone brighter than ever.

At that time he was the real and all-powerful master of Germany.

But the events of October, 1918, convinced Ludendorff that the hour of his responsibilities and decrees had struck. He retired to Berlin during the last days of October, 1918. He sent away the officers under his orders and set out the same evening for Germany.

General von Groener was nominated in his stead. He was not unknown in Charleville, where he had resided from the arrival of G.H.Q. to the end of 1916, in the capacity of Superintendent of Field Railways.

On November 13th, 1918, he left Headquarters at Spa and betook himself to Cassel with the General Staff.

The General Staff comprised four Quartermaster-Generals, who were, first Falkenheim, then Ludendorff, and Generals von Freytag, Zoellner, Sauberzweig and Hahndorf. At the



## The "Generalstab" (The General Staff)

beginning of the occupation, General von Freytag was entrusted with the task of dealing with the French administration through the agency of the *Kommandantur*. General von Hahndorf was also commissioned as a result of this, and took up all questions touching the issue of notes and the sequestration of banks, business houses and factories.

There were three special sections in the Préfecture.

The first, perhaps the most important in the whole of the General Staff, was the section of military operations, which only counted the most distinguished Staff Officers in its number. It was connected by telegraph and telephone with all points of the front and with all military centres and headquarters. When in March, 1918, G.H.Q. was transferred from Kreuznach to Spa, the official seat of the General Staff was Spa, but as a matter of fact, Hindenburg and Ludendorff, together with the section for military operations, installed themselves at Avesnes-sur-Helpe, where the Kaiser came to join them just before the big offensives of 1918 were launched. They remained at Avesnes till September, 1918, and went back, some to Spa, some to Verviers.

The political section was the connecting link between the Army High Command and the Imperial Government. It dealt, amongst other things, with the administration of the occupied regions.

The Intelligence section was entrusted with the task of collecting and co-ordinating all information of a strictly military character. The Intelligence Officers and services of all the armies and the Department for Prisoners of War were attached to this department. Within its jurisdiction came also the censorship of the Press.

The General Staff did not occupy the attention of Charleville to any extent. The mass of work which absorbed it day and night did not allow its members to make a show of themselves, like the Kaiser and his son.

A certain subaltern, however, gave rise to comment. His name was Boscharth. In Boscharth is *boche*, and in a Boche there is very often a thief. This Boche, or Boscharth, whichever you call him, had a passion for old furniture, antiques, *objets d'art*, old editions and bibliophiles' treasures. He was



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

always on the look-out. Not that he used the methods of Bill Sikes. Oh no! Our Boscharth was more refined. He had at his disposal the Staff's stamp and requisition forms. A regular requisition was forthwith produced, and the victim had no option but to accept: Boscharth was conqueror and lord. In this way he got together a veritable museum and furniture shop, which he sent off to Germany. He had arranged things so as to avoid investigation. The Staff had special carriages for carrying its documents and files, etc. Boscharth annexed one for himself, put the regulation seals upon it, left shortly after on duty for Berlin, where he received delivery, and, behold! the trick was played! This little intrigue lasted nearly two years. Boscharth had agents and accomplices, who used to advise him of good hauls to make, or who warned him in time if danger threatened his gang. But every adventure has an end, and Boscharth's stunts came to the ears of his superiors. He was sent to Berlin as a result of his exploits, and we do not know whether he was sent to jail or decorated with the Cross "Pour le Mérite," for, in Boche eyes, to rob a Frenchman is no crime, but an act of restitution.

Another story also gave rise to scandal.

The town of Mézières possessed an object of historic interest, an artistic drinking-cup of wonderful design, out of which Bayard, the saviour of Mézières, had drunk. It was well known to collectors, antique dealers and silversmiths as Bayard's Cup, and its photograph had been reproduced in many catalogues.

Now a Staff Order reached the town hall at Mézières, informing it that it had to move out of several municipal offices and departments in order to make way for German bureaux. Bayard's Cup had been hidden in one of these places, amongst the archives of the department. The municipality wishing to put it in safety—for it had every reason to suspect the occupying forces—made a search for the historic cup. Alas, it was nowhere to be found. Had it been stolen, or carefully hidden in some unknown spot, so that, when occupied France was reunited to free France, it should be produced again? Nobody knew.

## The "Generalstab" (The General Staff)

We were all lost in surmises, when, in 1917, an officer belonging to the administration of the Imperial Museums appeared before the Mayor of Mézières, and, showing him a photograph, asked if he knew the object depicted. It was a picture of Bayard's Cup. The Mayor could scarcely believe his eyes. When he had recovered from the amazement, he asked how this photograph had come into his hands.

A Berlin lady, he explained, owner of a large fortune and also a connoisseur of the arts, had been looking for interesting finds, when at the shop of a Berlin antique dealer a chiselled cup had attracted her attention. She examined it thoroughly, consulted her catalogues, found the exact facsimile, and was convinced that it was the historic cup which the knight "sans peur et sans reproche" had put to his lips. It happened this lady knew the official from the Imperial Museums, who was attached to the Préfecture of Mézières: she informed him of her find, and the latter, after making sure that this *objet d'art* was the one whose disappearance had been officially announced, took the necessary steps to restore to the town of Mézières a relic which had the greatest value in its eyes.

The General Staff had its happy days. It also had its days of disappointment, even of dread, when the army could not resist any longer, and the revolution began to appear on the horizon of Germany.

It did not remain immune from it.

In all the detachments of troops and military formations Soldiers' Councils were formed *on the advice of* Field-Marshal Hindenburg. The Supreme Council of the Soldiers had its seat in the Staff building, and called itself the Council of the Soldiers of Headquarters. It published notices, informing the soldiers and inhabitants of Spa that authority had passed into its hands, and enjoined them to maintain silence and order.

On November 10th, 1918, permission was given the inhabitants to hoist their flags, and for a short moment all Spa was decorated with Belgian and French flags. In the face of this spontaneous demonstration many of the higher officers took alarm and raced back to Germany in their cars. Thereupon the Soldiers' Council seized all the cars and forbade

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

anybody to leave G.H.Q. without its authorization. In order to avoid reprisals, the aristocratic officers of his Majesty had placed red flags on their cars. Every soldier had a red flag and wore a scarlet cockade in his buttonhole. The food in all the officers' clubs was confiscated, and the women employed as helps were obliged to leave Spa within twelve hours. These women were looked askance at by everybody on account of their scandalous behaviour with the officers. When Hindenburg and von Groener left Spa on November 13th, a special train was prepared to take them to Cassel, which had become the new G.H.Q. It was commanded by representatives of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council at G.H.Q.

Such was the pitiful end of the terrible General Staff, which had undertaken to make the whole world tremble before it. True, its organization was excellent. But the inborn pride in every German blinded him so that he could not conceive of any obstacle which could hold it back. When, at length, it bit the dust, there was no time to recover. The grain of sand had made its machinery useless. Instead of frankly stating the truth, and exposing the whole situation, the Staff adopted a system of steady lying, and in its official bulletins spoke of the German rout as successful rear-guard actions or a victorious defensive. When the people realized the situation, it was too late. Lying and pride had slain Germany, and its murderer was the sinister Ludendorff and his accomplices.

The great German Staff is no more. May it never arise again, for the safety of France and Europe and for the peace of the whole world.

## CHAPTER XII

### GENERAL HEADQUARTERS

German and French G.H.Q.—Composition of G.H.Q. and of the General Staff.—*Ettapenschwein*.—The gentlemen of the Automobile Corps.—A decayed prince.—The triumph of the shirkers.—Motorists as police and spies.—The descendants of the drivers of 1793.—The golden days are over.—German time.—Some proclamations.—A costly requisition.—A friend of the Kaiser who weeps about the sufferings of his soldiers.—The army of thieves and bandits.—A reign of terror.—The evil genius of Arnim.—If he could strangle the French.—The gibbets for the Allies.—The Treaty of Frankfort and police des mœurs.—A pasha at the *Kommandantur*.—Elementary school inspector, housebreaker and thief.—A Tartuffe.—Personal requisition.—The new carabineers of Gerolstein.—Final humiliation.—The people of Charleville are avenged.

THE German G.H.Q. is not the equivalent of our G.H.Q., which has practically the same organization, at any rate the same powers, as the General Staff.

The French G.H.Q. directs operations. It sends military orders to the Army Groups and the armies. The German G.H.Q. is a special administration which, while subordinate to the General Staff, is more especially attached to the service of the Kaiser.

This is why it is not called the Imperial G.H.Q., but bears the title of Grosses Hauptquartier S. M. des Königs von Preussen (G.H.Q. of H.M. the King of Prussia). It contained representatives of the civil and military departments which had immediate access to the Emperor of Germany, who was, at the same time, King of Prussia.

Side by side with the Ministries of War and the Navy there sat the Chancellory and the Imperial Secretariat of State for Foreign Affairs.



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

The G.H.Q. was, therefore, a semi-civil and semi-military administration, with as many ramifications in the Prussian Administration as in the Imperial Government.

The military and civil establishments, the military Cabinet of the Kaiser, were under the sovereign's immediate authority, together with the Chancellory.

The G.H.Q. contained :

1. The Marshal of the Court.
2. The Military Cabinet.
3. The Civil Cabinet.
4. The Imperial Chancellory.
5. The Ministry of War.
6. The Naval Cabinet.
7. The Foreign Office.
8. The Controller of the Imperial Household.
9. The Civil Police, called the *Geheime Feldpolizei* (secret military police), and the political police.
10. The Automobile Corps.

The General Staff was divided as follows :

1. Grand General Staff.
2. Field Telegraphs.
3. Field Railways.
4. Artillery.
5. Munitions and Ordnance.
6. Engineers and Pioneers.
7. Medical Services and Volunteers.
8. Sanitary Inspection.

A *Kommandantur* (G.H.Q. *Kommandantur*) co-ordinated the orders of G.H.Q. and of the General Staff in view of the necessary relations between the German authorities and the French Administration.

A *Kommandantur* of Lines of Communication, subordinated to the Inspection of the army area of the Third Army, then of the First Army in 1917, administered the districts of Charleville and of Mézières, which belonged to the territory of these armies. A third *Kommandantur* at the station was in charge of the superintendence of troops passing through and of transport. It was directly responsible to the General Staff.

## General Headquarters

The following is a list of the principal general and superior officers of G.H.Q. and the General Staff.

### I

#### G.H.Q.

##### THE EMPEROR'S SUITE

William II., Emperor of Germany.  
Count von Reischach, Marshal of the Court.  
General von Plessen, Chief of the Military Cabinet.  
Lieut.-General von Gontard.  
Lieut.-General von Chelius.  
Lieut.-General Count von Marschal.  
Colonel von Mutius.  
Lieut.-Colonel von Hahnke.  
Major von Caprivi.  
Major Count von Moltke.  
Major Count Arnim.  
Major Count Hirsfeld.  
Surgeon-General Dr. von Ilberg.  
Surgeon-Major von Niedner.  
Surgeon-Major Wezel.  
Colonel Prince Adolfe von Schoenburg-Lippe.  
Prince Leopold of Prussia.  
Major Seitz von Hohenloe, A.D.C. to the Prince.

##### CIVIL CABINET

Privy Councillor Valentin.  
Privy Councillor Abb.  
Privy Councillor Vollmann.  
Envoye Von Truetler.  
Privy Councillor Neimke  
Dr. Goenz (Ecclesiastical Councillor).

##### IMPERIAL CHANCELLORY

Von Bethmann-Holweg, Imperial Chancellor.  
Von Mutius, Privy Councillor.  
Count Zeck, Secretary of Legations.

# Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

## FOREIGN OFFICE

Von Jagow, Foreign Secretary of State.  
Von Stumm, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs.  
Von Redowitz, Ambassadorial Councillor.

## AUTOMOBILE CORPS

Chief Prince Waldemar of Prussia.  
Chief of Staff Major von Buxenstein, Commercial Councillor.

## POSTMASTER

Domislaff, Privy Councillor.

## THE EMPEROR'S CIVIL POLICE (GEHEIME FELDPOLIZEI)

Major Bauer  
Kuntze, Chief of the Political Police.

## CONTROLLER OF THE EMPEROR'S HOUSEHOLD

Lieut. Kaestner.

## MINISTRY OF WAR

General von Falkenheim, later appointed Chief of the General Staff.  
Major-General Wild von Hohenberg.  
General Count von Lyncker.  
Colonel Count von Marschall.  
Major Count von Hake.  
Major Count von Vehre.  
Major Count von Hoffmann.  
Privy Councillor Stellers.

## NAVAL CABINET

Admiral Müller.  
Privy Councillor Massmann.

## ADMIRAL STAFF

Grand Admiral von Tirpitz.

# General Headquarters

## II

### GENERAL STAFF

General von Moltke.

Then :

General von Falkenheim, formerly Minister of War,  
and finally Field-Marshal von Hindenburg.

General Rheetz, replaced by General Vogt.

Lieut.-General Ritter von Venninger (Military attaché  
for Bavaria).

Lieut.-General von Gravenits (for Würtemberg).

Lieut.-General Count von Leuckart (for Saxony).

Field-Marshal Count von Stürgh\* (for Austria-Hungary).

Lieut.-Colonel Baron von Bienerth (for Austria-Hungary).

Adjutant-General Zekki Pasha (for Turkey).

Colonel Gantcheff (for Bulgaria).

### MEDICAL SERVICES AND COURTS MARTIAL

Surgeon-General Prof. von Schierning (Chief of Medical  
Services).

Dr. Belle (for Military Jurisdiction).

### FIELD TELEGRAPHS

General Balk.

Colonel Marquis von Wolf.

Major Schak.

### FIELD RAILWAYS

General von Groener.

### FOOT ARTILLERY

General von Lauter.

### MUNITIONS AND ORDNANCE

Von Ortzen, Master.

\* Count von Stürgh helped to draw up the Austrian Memorandum to the Kaiser which let loose the war with Serbia.



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

### FIELD INTENDANTUR

Pieszsecke.

### ENGINEERS AND PIONEERS

Major-General Schultheib.

Major Wilche.

Major Wagner.

### DIRECTOR OF VOLUNTARY RED CROSS WORKERS

Prince Solens-Baruth.

### SANITARY INSPECTION

Major-General Schmidt.

Major-General Schulze.

### G.H.Q. KOMMANDANTUR

Commandant, General von Freytag.

Assistant-Commandant, Lieut.-Colonel von Hahnke.

Capt. Schmitzer, Adjutant Interpreter.

### KOMMANDANTUR OF L. OF C.

Capt. André.

### STATION KOMMANDANTUR

Major Schmidt.

There were at least six hundred officers at G.H.Q. They brought back to the little town the animation which it had lost when French troops and a section of the population retreated; sumptuous motor-cars furrowed the streets and elegant cavaliers cavalcaded in the main streets. They gave themselves up to fêtes and parties whilst their comrades were tasting the uncomfortable life of the trenches and calling them *Etappenschwein* (L. of C. "Cuthberts").

## General Headquarters

The Automobile Corps was a formation peculiar to G.H.Q. It was composed of volunteers belonging to the wealthiest classes of Germany, who had signed on for the duration of the war, and supplied motor-cars and drivers. They were given a special and fairly high gratuity for their pay, board and upkeep of their cars. The wherewithal was supplied to them by the Controller of the Imperial Household.

The Automobile Corps was put under the command of Prince Waldemar of Prussia, son of Henry of Prussia, High Admiral of the German Fleet and brother of the Kaiser. As has already been stated, Waldemar was a sorry creature, an invalid, afflicted with a purulent malady which made him limp badly. Like his uncle the Emperor, he was a victim of the hereditary disease with which the decadent race of the Hohenzollerns has been stricken in its degeneracy.

His Chief of Staff, Major Buxenstein, was an ardent drinker of Munich beer ; he was a Berlin magnate who thought quite as much of his own business interests as of the defence of the German Fatherland.

The Auto-Corps was the shirkers' paradise. It took to its bosom all the representatives of the big German automobile firms, the men of the world and the sons of the aristocracy, who did not care to bare their breasts to the French machine guns. They had a good time of it and their club was the centre of noisy, often scandalous, carousals.

Their work consisted in taking the orders of G.H.Q. to the services behind the firing line—there was no danger attached to it—and in reporting on what they saw during their journeyings to and fro, either in military circles or among the civilian population. The motorist was both policeman and spy.

Their chauffeurs were vulgar bandits, worthy descendants of the drivers of the Revolution. Wreckers and looters that they were, they would take upon themselves to clear out of a lodging and then pillage it, breaking and burning furniture, floors and wainscoting, ransacking the cupboards, searching for hiding-places and throwing into the streets all that they could not carry off. Threatening everybody as they did with revolution, they were the terror of their billets.

The golden days of the Auto-Corps did not last for ever.

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

The war went on and finances ran low. First of all their pay was decreased. It made little difference to its members, for their personal fortunes enabled them to bear this decrease without any great effort. Later there was a shortage of necessities, and the gaps in the front had to be filled. It was then decided to suppress the Auto-Corps and its aristocratic members had to put on second-lieutenants' uniform and go to the front. Consternation was general. The suppression of this corps coincided with the departure of G.H.Q. to Russia in August, 1916. Prince Waldemar returned to Berlin to tend his wounds, his Major Buxenstein followed him, and Charleville was deprived of their illustrious presence.

At this time the G.H.Q. *Kommandantur* stayed behind with the secret police and a few officers of G.H.Q. and the General Staff to keep open the offices, since the Kaiser and his suite were still supposed to be living in Charleville. The *Kommandantur* had arrived with G.H.Q. on 21st September, 1914, and a few days afterwards Lieut.-Colonel von Hahnke took over the command of it. His first act was to issue a proclamation in which he said among other things that "any hostile act against the German Authorities must be avoided." Any infringement would be severely punished according to the laws of war.

"Those persons also will be punished who, witnessing a malevolent act, do nothing to prevent it. The communes will be made responsible for any individual who evaded the statutory penalties."

German time was imposed, regulations were issued, fixing a time when everybody had to be within doors, and controlling traffic. Assemblages of more than two persons and navigation were forbidden; the sale of absinthe was strictly prohibited.

The Chief of the General Staff, von Moltke, caused another proclamation to be placarded about the town, the text of which was as follows :

# General Headquarters

## I

### PROCLAMATION

All the authorities of the French Government and the municipality are hereby informed :

1. Every peaceable inhabitant will be able to pursue his regular occupation in complete and undisturbed security. Private property will be respected absolutely by the German troops. Provisions of all kinds which supply the needs of the German army, particularly food, will be paid for in currency.

2. If, on the contrary, the population should dare in any form whatsoever, whether open or secret, to take part in hostilities against our troops, the most severe punishments will be inflicted upon the culprits.

All firearms must be deposited forthwith at the town hall. Any individual found bearing arms will be put to death.

Whoever cuts or attempts to cut the telegraph or telephone wires, or destroys the railways, bridges and highroads, or whoever commits any act whatsoever to the detriment of the German troops, will be shot out of hand.

Those towns or villages whose inhabitants take part in the fight against our troops, fire on our supplies and transport columns, ambush any German soldiers, will be burnt, and the guilty persons straightway shot.

The civil authorities alone are in a position to spare the inhabitants the terrors and scourge of war. They will be held responsible for the inevitable consequences of any infringement of the present proclamation.

The Chief of the General Staff of the German army.  
VON MOLTKE.

Finally, the Inspector of Lines of Communication issued a third proclamation well adapted to reassure the population. Let the reader judge for himself :



# Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

## II

### PROCLAMATION

The town of Charleville is now included in the army area.

I bring to the notice of the population the proclamations of the Generals commanding the German troops, of which the following are paragraphs 1 to 7.

1. The inhabitants are to abstain from any hostile act against the German troops.

2. The inhabitants are bound to supply victuals and fodder to our troops. Every transaction will be paid for immediately in currency or by cheque, the payment of which is guaranteed after the war.

3. The inhabitants are to lodge our soldiers and horses as well as is possible and houses are to be illuminated during the night.

4. The inhabitants are to keep the roads in good repair, to remove all obstacles constructed by the enemy and, as far as possible, to assist our troops in their doubly difficult task in enemy territory.

5. It is forbidden to assemble in the streets, to ring the bells or to get into touch with the enemy in any way.

6. All arms in possession of the inhabitants are to be deposited at the town hall within two hours.

7. The mayor, the curé and four prominent citizens of every town and village are to report to me forthwith to serve as hostages during the stay of the troops. These orders are still in force.

In addition I bring to public notice that every town or village is responsible for all damage done to the roads and means of communication within its boundaries.

For the special protection of the railways prominent citizens will be carried on trains as hostages if necessary, similarly some will be kept in very exposed positions.

Finally, I warn the population that all persons who do not belong to the enemy troops—also the Government officials of the enemy—will be punished with death if

## General Headquarters

they undertake to succour the enemy or to injure German troops. What applies to the German troops applies also to all military persons and German employees.

I guarantee the lives and property of the inhabitants if these conditions are fulfilled and if the conduct of the population is loyal, but I shall make use of the most rigorous measures against any transgression of my orders.

I desire the population to continue its habitual occupation as far as possible, and to do everything to guarantee internal order.

26th August, 1914.

INSPECTOR OF L. OF C.

Moreover, the Controller requisitioned the following as long as G.H.Q. or any portion of G.H.Q. is (*sic*) at Charleville, at Mohon, or at Mézières, to be paid for by the town :

1. Billets.
2. Three bullocks, weighing on an average 500 kilos daily. If possible 10 pigs also with an average live weight of 110 kilos.
3. 24 cubic metres of firewood (or coal).
4. 200 litres of good cows' milk daily.
5. 350 litres of red wine in little barrels with taps daily, and also one delivery of 25 bottles of Cognac.

This requisition took the place of the usual war levy which was imposed every time German troops entered a neighbourhood. It cost the three towns about 1,200,000 francs.

Lieut.-Colonel von Hahnke was a friend of the Kaiser, one of his intimates. His father, General von Hahnke, had been Chief of the Military Cabinet and himself a boon companion of the Kaiser. The Imperial favour ought to have procured for him very speedy advancement, especially during the war. He did not benefit by it, for he acquired his Colonel's rank with great difficulty.

It must be admitted that he had a particular repugnance for the front and that his masculine courage confined itself to signing chits and notices, levying war contributions,

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

inflicting fines and issuing fishing permits. He had a difficult manner, and deputed his adjutant, Captain Schnitzer, whom we shall soon meet again at the head of the infamous *Gazette des Ardennes*, to manage his interviews. He was scarcely known except for his notices, which often reflected his lively hatred of France. Thus in June, 1915, the municipality had asked him to postpone for an hour during the summer months the time when the inhabitants had to be within doors. His reply, dated 7th June, 1915, was a refusal, and added :

The population must console itself by thinking of the millions of our soldiers who have to undergo the hardships of war, which have been imposed upon them by those Governments which aimed at revenge and the annihilation of Germany.

To be just, however, it must be admitted that, if he was sometimes cantankerous, he was often quite conciliatory in certain delicate matters—the discovery of firearms, for instance, made in the municipal buildings—which could have meant heavy fines to the town. He was even quite reserved, and he had told his officers never to allude to current events, and never to try to wound the feelings of those Frenchmen who presented themselves at the *Kommandantur*. They were to confine themselves to the business in hand.

When the famous strategic retirement of 1917 obliged the Germans to withdraw their defence behind the celebrated Hindenburg line, Charleville, Mézières and Mohon were attached to the area of the First Army and the Inspector of L. of C. from Valenciennes installed himself there.

The First Army had an unpleasant reputation even among German officers and soldiers, who usually called it “the army of thieves and bandits.” What then must this band of barbarians have been like when even its own brothers considered it past master in the art of pillage and destruction. The last traces of G.H.Q. disappeared with the arrival of the Inspector of L. of C., and Lieut.-General von Heydebreck came to exercise his nefarious function in the Ardennes. His Chief of Staff was Colonel von Vireck, who seconded his General



## General Headquarters

in worthy fashion. We then perceive that this reputation had not been exaggerated. From the day when this Inspector of L. of C. was installed at Charleville persecutions and vexations multiplied, fines and sentences of imprisonment rained like hail, and the inhabitants lived under a reign of terror which did not cease until the arrival of Guillaumat's army. All that remained in the way of wines, furniture and works of art was systematically removed, and the French population confirmed the verdict of the Germans, the First Army was indeed an army of thieves and bandits. The *Kommandanturs* of G.H.Q. and of L. of C. were combined under the command of Count Arnim, member of the Prussian Upper Chamber, brother of the President of the same Upper House and of General Sixte Arnim, formerly Governor of Strassburg and during the war Commander of the Fourth Army on the Flanders front. He was also grand-nephew of the Arnim who was German Ambassador at Paris after 1870, the personal enemy of Bismarck and one of the signatories of the fateful Treaty of Frankfurt.

At first he had been attached to the *Kommandantur* of G.H.Q., where his duties had consisted principally of stealing wines. We can affirm that he discharged this duty to the satisfaction of his comrades. Personally Arnim was not a bad man, but he had a horror of responsibilities and depended for the direction of the *Kommandantur* on his adjutant, Lieutenant Löhr, a little bank clerk from Brandenburg who was dazzled by his own lieutenant's insignia. This Löhr was a regular bully, whose only pleasure was to harass and persecute the French, whom he would have liked to wipe out to a man.

He had a real influence on Arnim and was his evil genius. Treating everybody in the lofty manner he did, this little fellow of barely five feet in height possessed an unparalleled arrogance and was only happy when he could insult France. The only people who found favour with him were cowards and merchants who made him numerous presents. When he was at the *Kommandantur* of Nouzon he had redoubled his extortions; but the energetic protest of the Mayor, M. Léon Crepel, a courageous and worthy patriot, had got him removed from thence, and the Inspector-General had placed him under



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

the Commandant of L. of C. at Charleville. He knew what he was doing, for the wickedness of the one compensated for the weakness of the other.

Arnim was a big landed proprietor, one of those Prussian Junkers who had promoted the war. He manifested his hatred of us by erecting in his dining-room as many little gibbets as there were Allies in the Entente and in hanging from each of these a doll dressed as a soldier of each nation.

Careless and idle by nature, he confined himself to the signing of documents which he did not even read. Even this formality became too great an effort for him and he had a stamp made of his signature, which his departmental chiefs used for all documents without submitting them to him.

Among the regulations which bear the signature: "Count Arnim, Major and Kommandant," there are two which will perpetuate his memory. These are two orders signed by him giving precise instructions for the management of brothels, and the work of the girls in them. They are drawn up in terms which could not be surpassed for obscenity. It seems to us useful to point this out, for to find the signature "Arnim" on the Treaty of Frankfurt and on the walls of certain houses and in the bedrooms of prostitutes is something distinctly unusual.

Arnim passed the greater part of his day with his mistress, a languid blonde whom a section of the inhabitants made pay dearly for her aristocratic relations on the day of the Armistice, and he devoted the rest of the day to riding either on horseback or in his carriage. If he happened to come to the *Kommandantur* and received the delegate of a municipality, the Commandant was brought to earth; he was spoken to of a current event of which he then heard for the first time.

With Count Arnim we ought to bring to a close the list of the Germans of mark whom it is necessary to know; but we think that it is also necessary to present to the public a simple N.C.O. who seconded him admirably in his work of cleaning out.

It has already been stated that Dr. Appens was an inspector of elementary schools at the time of mobilization and revealed himself during the war to be a perfect housebreaker and stripper of cellars and rooms. We wonder how his conscience

## General Headquarters

as an inspector, charged with the development of moral sentiments among school children, could reconcile itself to this work of pillage.

Under the exterior of jovial good nature he was the falsest being that one could meet. With his furtive but mobile look behind his round spectacles, he never allowed any detail of any place to escape him, and his prodigious memory recalled to him after an interval of months the positions of insignificant objects which had escaped the occupants themselves.

When at work he always adopted a contrite attitude, deploring the task that he had been ordered to fulfil, and promising to use his influence to get the Commandant to rescind a measure which revolted his honest heart. The next day, however, he would return broken-hearted, and, in spite of it all, despoiled the unfortunate French.

He was well aware of the feelings that he left behind him when he departed. As he was saying good-bye to one of his victims, she asked him if he would come back again to Charleville one day. "Impossible," he replied; "I should want a bridge of gold across the Meuse to pay for the devastation that I have caused there." On that day he was frank for the first time in his life!

The *Kommandantur* left Charleville on 8th November, 1918, at four o'clock in the afternoon (German time). The golden days of Arnim and of Löhr had come to an end. The last news we had of them dates from 18th November, when they were at Gerolstein, the country of Offenbach's carabineers. The German revolution had been proclaimed and the Soldiers' Council had torn from the two officers their epaulettes and their cockade. They had received orders to act as connecting link between the Workers' and Soldiers' Council and the troops, and every day Major Count Arnim reported to the soldiers and received instructions which he meekly transmitted.

What a humiliation for the arrogant nobleman!

The Count was overwhelmed; he wept like a child, and his lieutenant was no less angry. To crown his misfortune there were no longer any French people that he could martyrize.

The people of Charleville were avenged.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE SECRET FIELD POLICE

#### (Kaiser's Safety and Counter-espionage)

The terror of the invaded territories.—The instrument of G.H.Q.—An officer turned policeman.—The enemy of Hansi.—The Grand Master of the G.F.P.—Two bright specimens.—How Wolter was "had."—The censor.—The horror of the house-to-house search.—Policemen and camp followers.—The merry story of an absinthe hoard.—The denouncer denounced.—Police society.—Schwarzkoppen's valet.—A gipsy from over the Rhine.—Rifles that don't fire.—A Parisienne "made in Germany."—A woman decoy.—A nice family.—A good thoroughbred pointer.—To protect Copusse.—A well-guarded Kaiser.—A trembling bully.—Policemen everywhere, even in the hedgerows.—Nuns as searchers.—They see a spy in every Frenchman.—War on aviators.—The little baskets of pigeons.—Trained retrievers.—The Chemin des Dames pigeons.—Preventing pigeons from doing their work.—Wireless and the G.F.P.—Espionage in Belgium.—The usefulness of smugglers.—A Governor-General confesses his impotence.—The sacrifice of the heroes.—Espionage by repatriates.—Truth will always out.

THE moment the Kaiser arrived in Charleville, elegant gentlemen clothed in the latest Berlin fashion made their appearance in the streets, walking gravely up and down and scrutinizing the passers-by with a profound and piercing eye. This band of ruffians belonged to the German Secret Police, which sowed terror throughout the occupied territories during the occupation. Nobody was at all deceived as to the abominable task they were about to begin.

The *Geheime Feldpolizei*, as it was called, was a mighty force in the hands of the General Staff. Born policemen as the Boches are, one could but expect them to introduce into their military machinery an organization which would enable them to penetrate into the remotest corners, to extort the



## The Secret Field Police

most intimate secrets and to extract by threats and intimidation any information that might be of service to the operations of their armies.

The *Geheime Feldpolizei* (secret military police) arrived at Charleville in the middle of September, 1914, when G.H.Q. was being installed there. Down to the end of March, 1915, its officers were accommodated in the Restaurant Holwec, Place de la Gare, and were afterwards transferred to the Avenue Mézières.

The control of the Secret Police was in the hands of Police Director Bauer, who was also a major in the reserve (Bavarian army) and police commissioner at Strassburg before the war. He was the son of a Munich head master, and after finishing his studies there he performed his military service in order to become an officer in the Bavarian army.

Some years afterwards he went to Alsace-Lorraine in 1887, and entered the German police service. For some time he acted as police commissioner at Metz and frontier commissioner at Novéant. He was then made adviser to the Alsace-Lorraine Ministry at Strassburg. In this capacity he was responsible for the superintendence of persons suspected by the police, especially those whose sentiments were supposed to be Franco-phile.

He played a special part in the Hansi trial. During the hearing he warned the Imperial Council against setting Hansi at liberty, even on bail.

When the war broke out, Bauer was put at the head of the secret military police at the German G.H.Q. In this capacity he was also chief of the secret police in the whole western theatre of war. Each army had its *Feldpolizei* under a chief officer, who had a certain number of inspectors at his disposal. When, at the end of June, 1917, the First Army, under Otto von Below, who was to be succeeded the following year by General von Mudra, was brought north into the Charleville region, the criminal police of this army established itself also at Charleville in a house in the Boulevard Gambetta. It continued to work side by side with the G.H.Q. police.

As chief of the G.F.P., Bauer was under the orders of the second commandant, Lieut.-Col. von Hahnke, who placed



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

full confidence in him. It was their mutual and constant endeavour to compel the inhabitants to bow to the German orders and regulations, by means of the heaviest possible fines and imprisonments. In this connection they worked hand in glove. Bauer was to propose the heaviest penalties. Von Hahnke settled them, and was often compelled to moderate the zeal of his over-impetuous collaborator.

The director of the infamous *Gazette des Ardennes*, who was also adjutant to the assistant commandant, was equally interested in the Secret Field Police. He frequently went to Bauer's office to denounce various inhabitants who had the honourable reputation of being hostile to the Germans or suspected as spies.

The Bavarian major was execrated by the people. He took a cruel pleasure in torturing particularly the women whom he cross-examined, and liked to drive them to despair by his persiflage and insulting raillery. Speaking French as he did quite correctly, he thought he was being witty in the French way. To assist him in his sinister task, he was surrounded by a gang of ruffians animated by the same passion for torture and all worthy supporters of such a chief.

In the van of those docile collaborators, who were prepared for any infamy or any crime, we shall place the sub-chief of the secret police, Commissioner Wolter. He was a bearded man of medium height, with false and furtive eyes behind his gold-rimmed glasses, and he never dared to look anybody in the face. He was cautious and insinuating, and tried to obtain by kindness and cunning the confession of his victims. He was profuse in his greetings and excuses, but this did not prevent him from pursuing his task with the savagery of a barbarian.

As he was naturally slow-witted, it was easy to put Bauer's adjutant out of countenance. For our own part (if we may be pardoned this personal intervention), we often had the pleasure of outwitting him every time he questioned us concerning the orations made at the obsequies of wounded French soldiers who had died at Charleville. We always ended by persuading him that our speeches were not such as would irritate German susceptibilities, and he would go away satisfied.

## The Secret Field Police

Before he came to Charleville, Wolter, who was born in Brandenburg, was a police officer in Berlin ; and in addition, a captain in the reserve. His services were not always appreciated as he desired, for he was sent to the front at the end of 1916, a fact which discomfited the brave captain exceedingly. He returned some time later to take over the censorship of letters. The reader can imagine how he discharged his new duties.

In addition Bauer was assisted by five police commissioners and about thirty inspectors. Although these belonged to the inimitable Boche police, the majority of them were of a somewhat doubtful morality. Some of them carried on business and forced merchants to buy from them under penalty of continual oppression. In his terror the wretched man used to submit to the high-priced demands of the police agents for the sake of his own peace of mind. But the submission was not always effective. The G.F.P. agent would point out his client to a colleague, who would hasten to search for and discover this merchandise of German origin. Then followed a serious fine, sometimes prison.

What a nightmare those searches were ! A cyclone could scarcely cause more devastation. The inspector would arrive at daybreak and enter, without knocking, even the rooms of young girls. They would compel them to dress in their presence. Nothing was respected. Private papers were exposed to their unhealthy curiosity ; mattresses and pillows were ripped open ; bedclothes and linen were hurled in disorder into a corner of the room. Generally the persons subjected to these searches were taken to the lock-up, leaving their houses to the mercy of the looters.

These searches were generally the result of denunciations. But the informers, who received a reward as the price of their treachery, did not always enjoy the fruits of their crime. A typical anecdote will support our statement.

Some toady had given information concerning a hoard of absinthe at a retailer's. The sale of this product was strictly forbidden, and rigorously suppressed. A search was made and the hoard discovered. The delinquent was punished with confiscation and a fine of 1,500 marks. The police agent,

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

delighted with his find, thanked the informer and gave him six bottles marked "Pernod" as a reward.

The agent had his own scheme. Scarcely had he got back to the offices in the Avenue Mézières than he pointed out the informer to a comrade and told him of the present he had just made. "The price is 30 marks at the moment," he said. "He will hasten to sell his stock. I cannot with any decency catch him at fault, since he has done me a service. Get on his track, you cannot help taking him by surprise. You will draw the premium and we shall share it."

The second inspector went off at once, caught the defrauder *in flagranti delicto*, and the latter found himself fined 1,500 marks.

The sale of absinthe was a source of revenue for the Boche police agents, who, aided by the N.C.O. Appens, the looter of cellars, sold it usually at 20 francs in French gold or 30 marks in German paper money.

And they found customers.

But this was by no means the limit to the dirty work of the secret agents. They frequented dubious establishments and low cabarets, they mixed with the scum of the population, and particularly with evil women. Some of them even gained a living by prostitution, and one of them who made himself too conspicuous was removed to another post: his name was Kramm. He had been engaged in German espionage at Nancy, where he knew the mistress of a corporal in a regiment and had asked her to get him a French machine-gun.

We could not mention all Bauer's collaborators, for they are too many. We shall content ourselves with pointing out the principal inspectors at the G.F.P. First among these we must place Inspector Funck, who was considered one of the best sleuths in the German police, and his colleagues, Longfils, Schlaf and Hemkehr. They spoke French and English pretty fluently, for all of them had had employment in France and England before the war.

Funck, who was punctilious enough, had a certain respect for himself. His method was wholly that of intimidation. He was always polite, but his utterances were brief and incisive. Pitiless when he discovered his proofs, he did not seek, how-



## The Secret Field Police

ever (let us be impartial), to incriminate innocent persons when he was convinced of their innocence.

Funck lived in France for a long time before the war, and for some years in Paris, where he was valet to the German military attaché, Schwarzkoppen.

Longfils, who spoke French with a slight Belgian accent, had also lived in France. He belonged to that band of spies from which were recruited those pseudo-gipsy orchestras which infested the cafés of big towns. He had a very good opinion of himself, and had some unlucky adventures which forced his chiefs to send him to Belgium.

He wanted to make out the discovery of some firemen's guns in a public building to be a grave conspiracy against the safety of the Germans. But the good faith of the townspeople was recognized. This failure to secure a verdict did not suit Longfils, who was bent on finding a store of arms at any cost. The first time he unearthed some guns in the drill-room for military training: they belonged to a school cadet corps and were harmless toys. The second time, he tried to pass off as rifles some old flint-locks without hammer or breech, which were used by the supers in touring companies.

The laughter of the inhabitants won over the German police, and, as a reward for his exploits, this smart agent was sent to watch the Dutch frontier.

The two other inspectors, Schlaf and Hemkehr, had also had positions in England and France, where they had been waiters.

Finally, the Secret Field Police made use of women. The most notorious of these is Marie-Louise Garnier, who was born in Mulhouse, and lived at Freiburg in Breisgau. It was her mission to call upon marked women. She carried out her duties, of which she was very proud, chiefly on the occasions of the departure of a repatriation train.

Marie-Louise Garnier was Bauer's evil spirit. She was short, thick-set, coarse-featured, and her dress consisted of costumes which she had partly stolen from French houses, and which she wore very badly. She was anxious to make herself indispensable to a certain group of Staff officers and police officials, whom she introduced to pleasant feminine acquaintances.

She would try to start a conversation and perform little



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

services in order to make her way into French families, with whom she always stressed her Alsatian origin. She had practised spying in France before the war, and had even been in our country during the course of hostilities. Before she officially joined the German police at Charleville, she played the rôle of a decoy in civil prisons, in order to worm out the secrets of those who were accused of being in intelligence with the enemy.

She certainly had claims on Bauer's confidence, and her antecedents opened wide the doors of the Field Police to her. For she had already been sentenced by German tribunals for misdemeanour. Her family were birds of the same feather. Her brother-in-law, who lived at Mühlhausen under the eyes of the high police, had been barred from the Kaiser's army for having spent several years in the cells.

Her nephew, a young hooligan of fifteen years, whom she had taken with her, did not disgrace his family. He had a good example before him. Dismissed for theft by his employer, a Freiburg dentist, he had had to be sent away from Spa on account of further pilferings, on the complaints of G.H.Q. officers.

This strange policewoman was noted for robbing the women who were authorized to return to France. She was convicted of robbing a set of furs from the repatriation train leaving on 18th December, 1918, and, to her shame—short-lived though that was—she was obliged to restore them. When, in February, 1917, G.H.Q. was transferred from Charleville to Kreuznach, Bauer remained with his employés at Charleville. He only left in March, 1918, when Headquarters moved to Spa. Here he remained till the conclusion of the Armistice.

It was imperative that the personnel of the secret police should be specially chosen throughout, for it had to watch over the most sacred interests of the Empire: the Kaiser, his son and G.H.Q.

The sacred person of the sovereign was well protected. A distinct administration, public and secret, under the direction of a *Justiz-Geheimrat* (Councillor of Justice), constituted a special service, feared as much as envied, since the slightest relaxation from vigilance might have the most grave consequences.

## The Secret Field Police

As the name indicates, the service for the Personal Safety of the Kaiser (*Der Sicherheitsdienst beim Kaiser*) had the duty of preventing any criminal assaults on the life or person of William II. The Emperor's apartments were surrounded day and night by police officers, and in the immediate neighbourhood of the Imperial Palace policemen were constantly on picket-duty.

While the Emperor occupied the residence of M. Georges Corneau at Charleville, the police mounted guard at the Place de la Gare, Cours d'Orléans, Rue Daux and Avenue de la Gare. Sentries belonging to his guard paced up and down the square in order to prevent any traffic in this public thoroughfare, which was reserved by order for his Majesty the King of Prussia.

Later, when the Kaiser stayed at the Villa Renaudin, at Belair, the police were stationed at different points of the château. If the Emperor went outside for a drive in his car, or, more rarely, for a walk in town, police inspectors guarded the streets and street-corners. In fine weather, when the monarch went riding on horseback at seven in the morning, the police preceded and followed the cavalcade, and occupied all the immediate surroundings, for fear of an attack. Very often, in order to make the watch still stricter, the residences surrounding the Imperial Palace were searched in turn from the attics to the cellars by the secret police, which called in the engineers to explore the basements and look for explosive matter—whence the origin of the rumours regarding attempts on the Kaiser's life.

In the immediate entourage of the Kaiser was a special body of police which used to be at his side even before the war. It was called the political police, and consisted of Police Commissioner Kuntze and three inspectors. It lived in the Imperial château, and performed its duties in the apartments of the King of Prussia, in the gardens and adjoining estates. In order to forestall any attempts on the Attila of modern times, his political police inspected in detail his lodging and his personal apartments twice a day. The same precautions were taken before he got up, and after he had gone to bed at night. When the Emperor visited the front, or went to Russia, Vienna, Sofia or Constantinople, the political police always had to

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

accompany him. It also moved from Spa to Holland, when he fled from his G.H.Q. on the evening of 9th November, 1918. His Adjutant-General, Excellenz von Plessen, the chief of his military cabinet, sent Bauer, the Director of the Secret Police, once a week, and the latter reported to him the measures taken by the police to ensure the personal safety of the Kaiser. Bauer was *persona grata* with William, for he was frequently invited to his table, where the Chief of the G.F.P. had to inform the Emperor about French espionage.

This bully, whose conquering moustachios pointed heavenwards, was a coward. So he never neglected any measure for the protection of his august person, and he professed a sincere affection for the police. Above all, he dreaded the avenging act of a champion of justice, and he trusted to the police to ward off his arm.

It was not sufficient for the Field Police to watch the immediate neighbourhood of Cæsar ; it was of the highest importance that the environs of G.H.Q. should be guarded, and that an eye should be kept on all strangers who were permitted to enter the towns of Charleville, Mézières and Mohon. Consequently the severest measures were decided upon with regard to the inhabitants of the district.

All French people of the occupied territories who came in from outside the G.H.Q. area had to possess a passport which was originally issued by the Assistant Commandant, and later, when G.H.Q. had moved to Kreuznach, by the O.C., L. of C., after favourable reports had been given by the Inspector, L. of C., for a removal from one army area to another, and from the Governor-General of Belgium for crossing the frontier.

Besides this, every inhabitant of more than twelve years of age had to be in possession of an identity card. After the Pauline Jacquemin affair, a grave case of espionage which cost several brave patriots their lives, a strict control was established by the secret police upon movements to the G.H.Q. area, and in its environs. There were police agents at all the most frequented points of the three towns, applying this control with the utmost rigour—in the market square, on all the Meuse bridges, in the neighbourhood of the Prefecture, where the General Staff was quartered, and at other points. Anybody



## The Secret Field Police

arrested coming from outside the area who had no passport was searched and incarcerated forthwith. Anybody who had forgotten to bring his identity card was fined forty marks and given twelve days' imprisonment by the Assistant Commandant and the O.C., L. of C. This control by means of identity cards was executed with amazing zeal by the police agents, for they drew a premium on every fine that they realized. The control of the entrance to the town was ensured with the same rigour. There were sentinels at every exit to verify the permits. Not only did they mount guard in the streets and at the exits, but the personal safety police encircled the town with patrols which hid in the fields and woods to catch people who were not armed with passports. Smugglers coming from Belgium often fell into the hands of the police, as well as women and children coming for provisions. The goods purchased by these poor people with their little hard-earned money were confiscated and never returned. In addition they had to pay the fine which was inflicted on them, regardless of the term of imprisonment that they had to serve.

A police patrol was kept day and night at Charleville station for the purpose of verifying the papers of all persons alighting there and of searching them in the hope of discovering suspicious objects. These searches were more than intimate, for the victims were compelled to take off all their clothes to go through them. At first nuns were given this unpleasant task with the women, and later the female police agent, Marie-Louise Garnier.

The spy organization working on behalf of the French and British General Staffs in the occupied territories of Belgium and Northern France was a source of great worry to the secret police. The police agents, always apprehensive, saw a spy in pretty nearly every Frenchman or Belgian, especially when a German attack came to grief at some point on the front. The various spy services, particularly those carried on during this war, were known to a certain number of inhabitants in the occupied district. They heard talk of aviators, who were landed for the execution of perilous missions. Many good patriots, who had stayed behind in the invaded regions, helped these aviators, and gave them every possible assistance, regardless of the great danger to which they were exposed. Similarly,



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

the French of the invaded districts were well aware that in spite of the strict watch and the closing of the Dutch-Belgian frontier, brave citizens sent by the General Staff had succeeded in passing from Holland into Belgium and the occupied territory of France, and in executing dangerous missions in the interests of the Allied Armies.

In spite of the vigilance of the secret police, a number of homing pigeons came into the hands of Frenchmen, who were conscious of their duty, and these were sent back to France, bearing with them extremely valuable information. These pigeons, placed in little baskets, had been dropped, by means of parachutes, by French aviators. The secret police waged continuous warfare against this form of espionage, and tried to prevent it by all the means in their power. It arranged matters so that passports were given only in exceptional cases, so as to prevent the transmission of news from one locality to another. It held the Franco-Belgian frontier rigorously watched, and Belgian territory was placed strictly out of bounds. By this move, the German police intended to prevent the spy systems working in Belgium from having access to those parts of France in German possession. Violent attacks were also made upon travelling pigeons, for fear that the inhabitants were sending military information by letter.

Correspondence with the interior of the invaded territory for Belgium or uninvaded France was strictly forbidden. The writing and transmitting of a letter, even if it only contained private and harmless information, and bore no relation at all to military events, was mercilessly punished. More often than not it was German soldiers who acted as the go-betweens in these prohibited correspondences.

In order to take aviators by surprise, the G.F.P., by means of sentries and patrols, kept under continual observation any high ground which could be used as a landing-place for aerial passengers. So great was the general fear of being unable to prevent our intrepid agents from fulfilling their missions ! In order to prevent the inhabitants from finding and utilizing the winged messengers, the German police used special dogs, which were trained to seek out these graceful birds. Police agents kept these dogs scouting the sectors which they had to

## The Secret Field Police

watch, whenever it was thought that the aviators had been dropping pigeons. In spite of this, however, many inhabitants succeeded in getting hold of a large number of these birds, and in sending very important information to France.

Unhappily some which were carrying messages strayed in their flight, owing to fatigue or other causes, and fell into German hands.

Here is an example. At the end of March, 1918, a pigeon was found in the Hirson lines in a state of complete exhaustion ; an ampulla attached to its leg contained information of the highest value. The message gave details of the transference of German troops towards the Chemin des Dames. The poor bird was released a few days before the Chemin des Dames offensive by a good patriot of La Capelle (Aisne). The German police were overcome with rage when they obtained possession of the pigeon and its document. The culprit was closely sought for, and the police would have had the greatest pleasure in putting him against a wall and shooting him. They were not successful.

After this discovery, the German military authorities placarded the walls with notices which indicated the methods employed by the French Staff to obtain information. It was also stated that the German General Staff intended to substitute German homing pigeons for those dropped by aeroplane.

The Boche police wanted to frighten the population of the invaded territories by these warnings, and indeed these methods were applied. But since they were not successful, big rewards were promised those persons who found feathered messengers and handed them over to the German authorities. Sad to relate, some wretches preferred to obey these summons rather than be of service to their country.

Some news was still transmitted to uninvaded France by wireless telegraphy. Various installations existed from before the war. During the occupation these apparatus were conscientiously used by those inhabitants who had remained behind.

Moreover, agents landed by aviators brought wireless apparatus for certain persons who were deserving of confidence and able to send information to France. The secret police

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

were not very successful in their searches, although they imagined installations to exist in every locality. Whole communes were searched from top to bottom, but the G.F.P. only succeeded once in discovering an installation in the North of France.

In Belgium the ground was much more favourable for carrying on espionage than in the occupied region of France. The Belgians did not require passports, and thus possessed a great advantage over us when they moved about; their identity card was sufficient. To this was added the neighbourhood of the Dutch frontier, and of course news passed more quickly from Belgium into Holland than from occupied France. With freedom of access and the possibility of travelling at liberty, the information services were able to exist more easily and to do more useful work.

It is well known that Holland has not got the same espionage law as Switzerland; consequently the French, English and Belgian organization had a good chance. Their main effort was to collect information on all events of a military nature happening in Belgium and to turn it to account. To this end the Intelligence Services established organizations with very reliable agents, whose work was to watch the movements of troops and to get information concerning military dispositions. The organizations at work in Belgium got into touch with Holland by means of persons who were particularly skilful in crossing the Belgo-Dutch frontier. For the most part these were smugglers who knew the devious routes in the frontier zone. They acted as couriers between Belgium and Holland and *vice versa*. Very often they connived with the frontier guards to get through, for the latter are always easy to bribe with victuals and money.

The spy organizations in Belgium worked excellently. General von Falkenhausen, Governor-General of Belgium, successor to the famous von Bissing, himself admitted it. He declared to some neutral journalists at the end of 1917 that he had suffered a great deal from the spying carried on in occupied Belgium.

Numerous agencies were discovered, either entirely or in part. In spite of the many death penalties or terms of im-



## The Secret Field Police

prisonment imposed on a certain number of Belgian and French patriots, it may be said that the German police, taking all in all, only put out of action a very small number compared with the organizations which existed. The G.F.P. owed the bulk of its success to treachery.

It frequently happened, too, that a courier was stopped on the frontier. On him was found hidden confidential information, which led to the discovery of a certain number of individuals. But the brave Belgians did not allow themselves to be dismayed by the numerous death penalties executed in their country, and if the German police did succeed in finding out some spy systems, these latter were immediately replaced by others.

One more terror of the Boche police ! Those persons who were being repatriated by special trains also constituted a serious danger from the point of view of transmission of information.

The German police was always opposed on principle to repatriation, and on several occasions made representations to the higher military authority regarding this matter. Through these trains the police chiefly feared espionage, and the circulation of news concerning the bad treatment meted out to the French of the occupied areas. But the High Command could not grant this request, for it was of the highest importance to get rid of as many persons as possible, in the interests of the provisioning of the city.

Those persons whom the German police suspected of espionage, or who had made themselves prominent by their patriotism or their hostility to the invader, were mercilessly struck off the list of repatriates.

Luggage was ransacked. After the luggage came the search of person, carried out by police agents and police women. Children, as well, were subjected to this painful formality. Those persons who had been searched were completely separated from their compatriots ; they were shut up in a place where they were closely watched. They were not even allowed to see their family again.

And yet, in spite of these unheard-of precautions, the truth filtered through, and our Intelligence Department was always in possession of exact and timely information.



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE FIGHT AGAINST PATRIOTISM

Patriotism prohibited.—The French colours taboo.—An owner of the Medal of Honour who does honour to his ribbon.—A patriotic clergy ; war on the curés.—The " Poilu in a cassock."—Unfavourable conditions.—The funerals of French soldiers.—Germany afraid.—A funeral procession reduced to its simplest terms.—July 14th in the occupied regions.—The French flag waves in the air.—A costly joke.—It is forbidden to read or write.—How to obtain French newspapers.—The population registered.—To avoid the Boches.—Useless vengeance.—The hunt for French soldiers.—The Military Police.—Rivals of the G.F.P. camp followers.—Tracking down deserters.—*Stadt Wache* (The Town Guard).—" Big Boys' " Police.—Traitors to their own country.—Honour to good women.—The women clients of Wezel, the dandy.—A professor of moral studies.—The pavilion.—The ladies of these gentlemen.—Agents for German safety.—The motives for their treachery.—Patriots with false noses.—The G.F.P. prison.—Dangerous decoys.—Looking for soldiers.—" Where are the arms ? "—Too mild a punishment.—Involuntary informers.—The thirty pieces of silver of Judas.—Anonymous treachery.—To point out traitors is not to denounce.—Honest folk want to be avenged.

THE Secret Field Police was convinced that the French army was in constant communication with the inhabitants of the occupied regions, and obtained important information from them. It was therefore its duty to keep a sharp look-out for clues and try and destroy an intelligence system so detrimental to the plans of the Staff.

The G.F.P. watched the population not only for counter-spying, but also for acts which were calculated to raise the *moral* of the natives. It was strictly forbidden to meddle in national matters, which would maintain amongst the French the hope and confidence which had never failed them, even under the most critical circumstances. The G.F.P. had pro-

## The Fight against Patriotism

hibited the wearing of the tricolour, and even tried to take away the red, white and blue ribbon from those who had received civilian decorations. One of the members of the Municipal Council of Charleville, M. J——, although called upon twice to remove his decoration, energetically refused to obey such an order, even under threat of prison. Knowing himself supported by law, he filed a protest with Police Headquarters and the *Kommandantur*, stressing the fact that the wearing of these ribbons was authorized not only in France, but also by the Chancellories of foreign nations, amongst others, of Germany, which was not harsh about this, even in Alsace-Lorraine. M. J—— gained his point, and the police were reluctantly obliged to tolerate the sight of the prohibited colours.

The resident clergy, worthy rivals of the Belgian curés, formed the object of an uneasy surveillance by the spies of the Boche Secret Service. All the priests fostered the cult of patriotism and faith in ultimate victory amongst their parishioners. We should like to mention in especial, out of this fine body of ecclesiastics, the name of Abbé Bihéry, vicar-in-chief at Charleville, whose passionate sermons won from him the honourable title of "the Poilu in a cassock."

The police did not miss a single word from the lips of the preachers, and their slightest actions formed the subject of exhaustive investigations; on all Sundays and holidays, the churches in Charleville, Mézières and Mohon, as well as in the towns which possessed the unenviable privilege of a German police, were watched by Inspectors. But although they spoke French fairly well, their dull and heavy wits generally failed to grasp the subtleties and spirit of the language.

That is why, if a preacher uttered a single word which in German eyes was calculated to stir up the feelings or rouse the patriotism of his congregation, he was very severely punished.

There was another kind of ceremony which used to perturb the police, namely, the funeral of French or Allied soldiers. A certain number of these brave fellows had died in hospital and were buried in the cemetery at Charleville, in a plot specially reserved for our heroes.

At the beginning of the occupation, the bodies were handed

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

over to the civil authorities, who celebrated their obsequies with due solemnity. A flag in the national colours was laid upon the coffin ; the fire-brigade, in uniform, but without arms, paid military honours in the name of the French army. The municipality was officially represented, and in its train marched a long procession of patriots. The hearse was buried beneath flowers and wreaths tied with tricolour ribbons.

At the graveside, the head of the municipal council spoke a few words of farewell, impregnated with a lofty spirit of patriotism.

Germany was in danger ! First of all, one of Bauer's agents was sent to the cemetery to eavesdrop on the speeches and conversations. Next came an order to remove the flags and national colours of "the enemy." Then the procession was limited to fifty persons, and finally, as the result of an incident created on 5th April, 1918, by a pastor who celebrated the obsequies half an hour before the time fixed by the *Kommandantur* (an incident which provoked a protest on our own part, and cost us seven days in prison at the Charleville Detention House), the population was forbidden to take any part whatever in these obsequies. Only a delegation from the municipal council, composed of three members, was admitted to the cemetery.

These regulations lasted till 10th November, 1918, when Charleville was finally liberated, and, without constraint or spies, but under *the shells of a bombardment*, was able to bury two brave young poilus who had been mortally wounded at the crossing of the Aisne.

The celebration of the National Holiday of July 14th was another day of agony for the Boches. It was announced on posters with a marginal note "National Holiday of July 14th," and was celebrated by a service in memory of the soldiers who had fallen for their country during the war of 1914-1918. In order to seize on prohibited phrases and prevent patriotic addresses, numbers of police agents made their way to the little church, which was too small to accommodate the citizens of political parties and creeds who wished to attend. Agents walked about in the streets so as to prevent the slightest French demonstration in the city and in the cemetery, and so as to



## The Fight against Patriotism

arrest anyone wearing red, white and blue badges. In spite of their vigilance, they did not prevent a majestic French flag from floating gaily over the artillery barracks on 14th July, 1918, a symbol and harbinger of the unsuccessful German offensive in Champagne and of the great liberating victory of Foch, Gouraud and Mangin. This little joke cost the town 30,000 marks.

The reader will not be surprised to learn that political meetings were strictly forbidden.

The G.F.P. devoted special attention to preventing news from unoccupied France from filtering into the invaded districts. That is the chief reason why we could not obtain French newspapers and pamphlets dropped by aviators. From time to time the German authorities put up posters ordering the inhabitants to hand over all papers and pamphlets dropped by aviators or balloons, under penalty of a fine or imprisonment. A monetary reward was paid to any person bringing in propaganda sheets. Further, anyone who received correspondence otherwise than through authorized channels and by means of prisoners of war, or anyone who was found in possession of letters, French newspapers or pamphlets, was prosecuted for espionage, and sentenced to severe penalties of imprisonment or confinement.

All these barbarous measures did not prevent many inhabitants from receiving letters from Holland or obtaining French newspapers. It often happened that soldiers would steal newspapers from their officers and gave them to civilians in return for a tip or gift of food.

Even the infamous *Gazette des Ardennes* did not escape the common fate of numerous French journals, but it was chiefly *L'Echo de Paris*, *L'Homme Libre*, *Le Temps*, *Le Matin*, *Le Journal* and *La Victoire* which used to disappear each day, down to the very last days of the occupation. They were all fairly recent issues, rarely more than four or five days old. What delight when we succeeded in getting a copy !

Men of military age were placed under the special control of the German police. An employment book, which contained the name, address and occupation of the individual in question, together with a deposition from his employer regarding the



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

nature of his work, was given to every man between the ages of seventeen and forty-eight, whether liable to military service or not. In addition, he had a red identity card instead of the white one which was given to women, to children between twelve and sixteen years of age, and to men above forty-eight. Men liable for mobilization were obliged to work, and had to appear once a month before the secret police with their employment book. Whoever failed to comply with their orders and with the orders of the Employment Bureau (*Arbeitamt*)—an annexe of the secret police—was sentenced to a heavy fine. In addition, he was sent to a disciplinary battalion and forced to do hard labour.

Many young men, brought up in French traditions, with a sense of duty, could not accept such a situation. They preferred to make for the Dutch-Belgian frontier, try and outwit the vigilance of the sentries, and reach France in order to serve their country to some purpose.

Some of them were arrested on the way by patrols, policemen or detectives, or were betrayed to the enemy through the treachery of certain guides. These young men were deported to Germany and interned in a civilian prison camp. However, many of their comrades succeeded in their efforts, in spite of the bullets of the guards and the electrified barbed wire on the frontier.

The Field Police always tried to prevent the departure of young men liable for military service. To this effect, instructions to report were published, and every head of a family was obliged to announce the departure or absence of a mobilizable relative within twelve hours. Needless to say, fathers and mothers preferred to undergo the severities of German justice rather than betray their children.

As a matter of fact, whenever a young man succeeded in passing over to Holland, the G.F.P. took vengeance on his family. As a general rule, the father was sentenced to a fine of 100 marks or 30 days' imprisonment. In addition, all the members of the family were placed under the strict surveillance of the Police of Safety. This organization also hunted down a number of French soldiers who had lost touch with their units in the early fighting of 1914, and had remained

## The Fight against Patriotism

behind the German lines. Any French soldier caught in civilian clothes in occupied territory was liable to the death penalty, or at the very least to a long term of imprisonment.

A certain number of inhabitants who had concealed soldiers and given them food and lodging were either condemned to death or deported to Germany and sentenced to long years of hard labour. An eloquent proof of this may be found in the Tocqué affair.

In conjunction with the secret police at Headquarters and the criminal police of the army, was a similar service whose object was purely disciplinary.

The military police (*Militär Polizei*) was attached to the *Kommandantur* and had to enforce all orders issued by the Commandant or his Adjutant. These officers had to be kept posted about affairs in the three towns by the lieutenant who was chief of the military police.

The military police consisted of two branches : the military police proper and the street police.

The duty of the military police was to follow up all criminal actions committed by both soldiers and civilians, except crimes and offences against the common law committed by French civilians against their fellows, which came within the sphere of the municipal police.

It took over the duties of the secret police when the latter left again for Spa.

Finally, the chief task of the military police was to seek out German deserters, who swarmed in the three towns. This was no small task, for each new offensive by Ludendorff brought back a mass of Field-Greys who objected to returning to the front. The prospect of several years in prison was vastly more attractive to them.

At the same time the chief of the military police was in charge of the detention houses in Charleville and Mézières, and of the military prisons specially established for the innumerable deserters of the Kaiser's armies.

The street police consisted of soldiers of the Landsturm, whose function was indicated by a red, white and black brassard. It was known as the *Stadt Wache*, which the malicious citizens of Charleville translated by a bovine word used in

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

a rather more parliamentary manner by M. Clemenceau, when he called his subordinates a crowd of ladylike helpers. The good folk of the Ardennes were not as polite as the Tiger.

The Belair quarter had a special guard which belonged to the Crown Prince's police, and was independent of the G.F.P. It was composed of three inspectors of the Berlin police, who were attached to his person from pre-war days. One of them is already well-known to the readers, Klein the criminal, who always wore a green suit and a hat of the same colour. He invariably used to follow his master's automobile on a bicycle and his duty was to fill the Crown Prince's harem.

Prince William's police was not under the direction of Bauer. It was under the orders of Major von Müller, and was stationed near the château, whose grounds it patrolled day and night.

The G.F.P. was admirably equipped for the terrible task it had assumed. The life and liberty of the citizens were in its hands, and it took advantage of its unlimited arbitrary powers as it desired. But if it had been acting only on its own resources, it would often have found itself powerless to discover matters which made it invaluable to the High Command. If all French people had been able to hold their tongues, how many heroes who perished by the bullets of a firing squad would still be alive.

Unhappily it is our sad duty to record the fact that the police was assisted in its evil machinations by some scoundrels who did not hesitate to work against their own country in the hope of appeasing feelings of personal hatred or selling their compatriots, and even their friends and relations, for some filthy lucre. This category includes evil-living women and informers.

If we are to do justice to those brave people who resisted the enemy in every way, we have the shameful duty all the same to indicate certain acts of defection, which will for ever dishonour those who performed them.

Although mothers of families that were short of everything had their hearts torn by the hungry cries of their children, but yet remained true to their honour; other women did not possess this feeling of honour in an equal degree and abandoned themselves to the worst of debauches with the enemy. We



## The Fight against Patriotism

believe that we should not keep silent on this point, so as to render homage to those who remained worthy of their country. We shall brand the one type to do homage to the other. Let us acknowledge, nevertheless, that they were in the minority, and that these vile women do not stain the reputation of the invaded regions of France. For this reason the German police established a special civil police during the occupation, not to check prostitution—it was too serviceable to the G.F.P. and was encouraged—but to control it in the interests of the army. The victims had to report to the German police and give the name of the woman they suspected.

The civil police was controlled by Inspector Eugene Schott, formerly a police officer in Cologne; he was an inveterate drunkard, who in the morning never neglected any of the duties of the perfect Catholic and in the evening liked to pursue moral studies with his female clients.

The women who frequented the circles of the officers and the police formed a different category. But this high favour did not exempt them from the little formality with Dr. Wezel. They were received by the Kaiser's dandy friend in a different room from those of the hospital.

These abominable creatures fulfilled a double purpose. In the first place they responded favourably to the advances of all grades of Boches, but they also supplied useful information about their compatriots either to their friends of the moment or their policemen lovers.

To some extent, therefore, they can be catalogued among the informers.

The Tocqué affair produced some startling revelations concerning the way in which informers worked in the occupied territory. The G.F.P. was able to establish most opportunely a system of treachery which rendered the greatest service. It had at its disposal a number of French spies which it could not have done without. It had special funds with which to pay them. These informers were called *agents for the secret police*.

In most cases these informers, urged by a revolting cupidity, volunteered their services to the German police. Others, spurred on by necessity, abandoned themselves to this



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

repugnant employment in the hope of securing a more agreeable existence or of enjoying certain advantages which were denied their fellow citizens. Lastly, a third category of scoundrels "sneaked" from a desire for revenge or else out of spite at having been punished for some misdemeanour whilst a neighbour or a more favoured rival had gone scot-free. This is the explanation of the innumerable arrests of young people who had been hidden and who were afterwards sent into Germany as civilian prisoners of war, or into disciplinary battalions.

The miserable wretches who served as "agents" for the police were given their jobs according to their capabilities and their ability to execute them.

The most skilful agents were used in the counter-espionage service. They had to get into touch with those inhabitants who were suspected of espionage or of patriotic propaganda, or give assistance to the young men who tried to escape the exigencies of the German *Kommandantur* by taking to flight. They would win their confidence by a display of false sentiments and offer to act as guides to the frontier, to find travelling companions for them, or even to get letters from certain persons delivered to their families in uninvaded France, and to secure replies from the latter. Now and again they would pose as French soldiers who had stayed behind the enemy's lines or as agents from the Allied Staffs.

Others were given facilities for going to Holland in order to get into touch with the Entente intelligence services by representing themselves as agents at the disposal of the spy organizations. These traitors often succeeded in their wicked occupation, and this Franco-Belgian branch of the German police led to the discovery of organizations in occupied France and in Belgium.

Another method of procuring information secured results through the agency of decoys. This species of informer consisted of "agents" in the pay of the police, who worked in the civil prisons. They were locked up, not to work off a sentence, but to make their fellow-prisoners "talk." In the cells they would spy upon prisoners undergoing cross-examination, particularly those who refused to confess or betray their accomplices.

## The Fight against Patriotism

The decoys would represent themselves to be the victims of Boche injustice or barbarity, and would boast of their own patriotic deeds or pretend to be emissaries of the Allied counter-espionage service. Some people turned a kindly ear to the lying talk of their prison companions, and allowed themselves to be drawn into confidences or confessions which would be immediately conveyed to the counsellor of justice, reporter to the court-martial. The latter would put them through a close interrogation crammed with facts and details ; if necessary, it would confront the victim with the informer, and in the end the former would fall into the trap, dragging down other accomplices in his fall.

The G.F.P. also made use of another category of agents who had quite a special duty of their own. This was to find French soldiers who had hidden in the woods on the frontier and in the farms and villages. Their method of work was quite different. They posed as members of the French army in a similar fix, and would go among the inhabitants, taking advantage of their patriotism and generosity. Then when they knew the hiding-places, they would inform the German police, who came up at once. Richard, the murderer of M. Jacquet at Lille ; the denouncers of Dr. Fréal at Chaumont-Porcien ; the Tocqué band in the Aisne and the Ardennes, were thus the precious assistants of the Kaiser's executioners.

These spies also tried to find out the possessors of firearms and munitions. They had to keep themselves informed as to the mentality of the inhabitants, and they would try and procure French newspapers in order to discover by what means people obtained possession of them and through whose hands they had passed.

Side by side with these criminals, for whom the gallows would be too mild a punishment, there must be placed those involuntary informers who by their heedless chatter, which was devoured by interested ears, or from fear of punishment or prison, which was aggravated by the threats of a clever inquisitor, were drawn into making disclosures and so betrayed their friends.

With what money were these Judases paid ? It is well known that the German budget has always devoted wild sums

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

to the Secret Service funds, which are exempted from fiscal control. The Kaiser was the sole master of them, and disposed of them as he wished, to maintain the army of spies which poisoned France, Belgium and the whole world after 1870.

One cannot be surprised if these traitors had to go for their pay to this reptile exchequer to receive the rewards for their crimes. The payment of the agents was different. Some of these rascals made a great deal of money out of their dirty work. The German police which operated in Belgium and occupied France spent many millions on the services of these agents. Those agents who were sent into Holland to try to get into touch with the representatives of the enemy intelligence services were generously paid. These scoundrels not only drew money but victuals, generally those which had been confiscated from smugglers.

As a general rule it may be stated that a big spy affair was rated at 800 marks (£40), a medium affair at 500 marks (£25), and an ordinary one at 250 marks (£12 10s.). For information about a hidden French soldier, the fee was 60 marks (£3); the discovery of a store of arms and munitions 50 marks (£2 10s.); information about a person in the possession of French newspapers 20 marks (£1).

Another form of human baseness was manifested even against honest people in the shape of anonymous letters. Even the German police agents were disgusted by this method, and they were not very particular. Every decent person and every French administration was besmirched by these letters. The G.F.P. pretended to be nauseated, but it turned these anonymous denunciations to good account. Every accusation contained in these letters was taken into consideration, and the inspectors immediately proceeded to make their inquiries and domiciliary searches down to the minutest detail, and even to make arrests.

Such, then, are practically all the methods adopted by the G.F.P. to fulfil its implacable mission. It was so distributed as to have an agent in every locality. More often than not there was an informer in every little commune; and always several in the larger units.

Indeed, it is very painful for us to expose such base deeds,

## **The Fight against Patriotism**

but our conscience as Frenchmen would reproach us for not having pilloried these prostitutes and these traitors who worked against their own country, and were the cause of so much suffering. We owe it to those families who are weeping for their children, to those honest women who have suffered so much, and to those patriotic workmen who have refused to work on war material.



## CHAPTER XV

### THE WAR CORRESPONDENTS OF THE GERMAN PRESS

Singing the praises of the Superman.—Guests of the Kaiser.—Military attachés of the Neutral Powers and Boche journalists.—Reporters who see nothing at all.—A very limited confidence.—Journalists who do exercises like schoolboys.—The attachés at the front are allowed no freedom.—Far from the Kaiser.—The headquarters of the Press.—Beer on tap.—Disgraceful conduct.—The orgies of the decadence.—The martyrdom of a dog.—The journalists' carnival.—Complaint against a parasite.—An inexhaustible store of linen.—War correspondents.—Articles to order.—A deputy protests.—Visits to the front.—War with bottles.—Under the eyes of the High Police.—The Allied and Neutral correspondents.—The unspeakable Colonel "Eigle."—The Prussian Scheuermann.—His début in journalism.—The war a source of money.—Lille becomes *Ryssel* and Charleville *Karlstadt*.—A prophecy by Scheuermann which doesn't come true : To unveil a patriotic monument.—Messrs. Rosner, Katsch, Wegener, Kalkschmidt and others.—The Iron Cross for essays in style.

ONE fine morning in September, 1914, some days before the arrival of the Kaiser at Charleville, Captain von Rochow, who was instructed to establish G.H.Q., went to the Belair district to find quarters for the guests of the Kaiser who were commissioned to exalt his glory and celebrate his exploits and his merits as a Superman. These guests fell into two categories, which, without belonging either to the army or to the German administration, came under the head of the auxiliary services ; the one was military, the attachés of the Neutral Powers, authorized by the Kaiser to follow operations on the German front, and the other civilian, the war correspondents of the German newspapers.

The General Staff had ordered these two extraneous branches of the service to be installed at a good distance from its own

## War Correspondents of the German Press

quarters, so as not to allow them to see things, or discover information which might jeopardize the plans of the Staff by their indiscretion. The confidence of the Staff, especially in its journalists, was very limited, and Von Rochow was only echoing Staff views when he said during the course of his investigations: "The journalists are quartered as far as possible from our offices, and we only take them within twenty miles of the front. They are dangerous men, for they cannot restrain their pens."

And so their rôle was confined to taking notes, like school-boys, writing essays on a given subject and submitting them to the approval of the censor.

The military attachés were lodged in a beautiful villa, overlooking the Meuse and commanding a superb view, but situated more than three kilometres away from the Prefecture and altogether out of the military centre. There were fourteen of these attachés at first, including the Italian, Rumanian and American representatives, and they belonged to the following nations: Spain, Switzerland, Holland, Italy, Greece, Rumania, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, China, the United States, Brazil, the Argentine Republic and Chili.

The Italian attaché left G.H.Q. on 21st March, 1915, and the attachés of the other Powers which sided with the Entente three months before their entry into the war.

Swiss, Dutch and Swedish missions also passed through Charleville, but these were quartered in the vicinity of G.H.Q., as their stay was for a definite and limited period.

From time to time the military attachés would make a trip in motor-cars to the front, but on every occasion they were accompanied by German Staff officers, who dogged their steps and did not allow them to wander or stray apart. When the Kaiser came to live in Belair, the foreign officers were transferred to another secluded spot, four kilometres from there, in the Bellevue district, which was situated to the north of Charleville. They still had the advantage of a wonderful view, but that was all. During the last years of the war, the foreign missions were abolished altogether, and the attachés returned to their legations in Berlin.

The German journalists were installed in the Villa Renaudin,

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

which was to become the residence of the Kaiser. They brought themselves into prominence by their gay life, doing full honour to the carefully kept cellars of the house and settling in the château, which they turned topsy-turvy. They behaved like real Boches. And indeed, when the Kaiser, after numerous visits from French aviators, decided to fly to a safer refuge and selected this property, the German journalists, forced to move, carried off part of the valuable furniture with them and obliged the Billeting Service to requisition other furniture for the use of his Majesty. They then took up their residence in the Boulevard des Deux Villes, and selected for their club a fashionable little house belonging to a member of the Chamber of Commerce, M. Menager. Their stay in this house was characterized by sheer beastliness—we cannot think of any other word which describes their conduct. From Belair they had brought the silver and the crockery which they had easily been able to take, because William only used his own table service. At M. Menager's house they indulged in disgusting orgies. This respectable dwelling was turned into a disreputable tavern. All the rooms were illuminated *a giorno*. On the dining-room table stood a cask of Munich beer, from whose tap everyone swilled, till a heavy Teuton drunkenness prevented them from imbibing any more of the indigestible liquor. When the war correspondents of the great German newspapers were in this condition, their greatest delight was to smash the crockery and throw it out of the window.

The journalists, whom the Press of the civilized world should pitilessly cast forth from its bosom, took part, according to the statements of M. Menager, in scenes of the most disgusting sadism.

The table was presided over by Captain von Buntzen, the representative of the General Staff. It would seem that he was more or less a gentleman, for he did not take any part in the horseplay and retired whenever it threatened to degenerate into scandal. This captain possessed a magnificent dog, to which he was very much attached. One night, two of the journalists, Scheuermann and Queri, excited with drink, perpetrated outrages on the unfortunate animal well worth of the savages that they were. A wild and bestial idea



## War Correspondents of the German Press

entered into their heads, stupefied with the fumes of alcohol. They seized the dog, tied it fast, and slashed at it alive with knives, in spite of the terrible barks, which woke up the whole quarter. Then they let it loose in the street, and the martyred animal collapsed in the Cours d'Orléans. However, it managed to find its way back to the house. Did they realize the seriousness of their behaviour then, or was it merely another cruel impulse they were obeying? They alone can tell! The fact remains, that after having hacked the dog alive, they throttled it, and flung the carcass into the street. Captain von Buntzen registered a complaint at the G.F.P. against them, and they received a severe reprimand. That was all their punishment.

On another occasion, in February, 1918, M. Menager informs us, they celebrated Shrove Tuesday in their own fashion. They were, of course, dead drunk, and decided on a torchlight procession. Their fancy dress was not very expensive: they simply disguised themselves as savages. And then, in this most primitive of costumes, with a mug of beer in one hand and a candle in the other, they wandered through the rooms and posed on the staircase in obscene tableaux vivants, which we leave it to their colleague, Maximilian Harden, the historian of the Moltke-Eulenburg scandal, to describe. They tried to drag Captain von Buntzen into their orgies, but this officer, beside himself with anger, refused to have anything to do with such cads, and when they became pressing, threatened them with his revolver.

In order to avenge themselves for the incident of the dog, the Boche journalists complained to the General Staff about their table president, whom they accused of having enjoyed their party without spending a penny.

They left with the last débris of G.H.Q. in March, 1918. It goes without saying that they carried off some very valuable furniture. In order to conceal their plunder, they paid insignificant sums to their women attendants, whom they used to terrorize. In this way they stole over a thousand pounds' worth of furniture for which they did not spend as much as 1,500 marks.

The wardrobes of M. Menager, who was a large dealer in



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

linen goods, were emptied. "This gentleman's wardrobes are a regular store of linen," they said, "and it is a real pleasure to draw on them." This was the way in which the German Press observed the laws of hospitality.

Each important newspaper had its war correspondent at G.H.Q. They were supposed to make trips to the front and then write articles describing what they had seen and experienced. It was the only way of maintaining the *moral* of the people and army, which was apt to be shaky at times. We say "supposed to make trips," for, in reality, the war correspondents never went to the front and only reported what they had been ordered to publish. At Charleville there was a Military Press Bureau, where the war correspondents received the latest news from the front and were instructed how to present it in their articles. At times, one of their number, Wegener or Kalkschmidt, was commissioned to write an article for general use after a prescribed pattern, and this was afterwards reproduced in a large number of newspapers.

At a session of the Reichstag, Haase, the independent Socialist Deputy, reproached the war correspondents with "trailing behind the front and writing articles which were not in accordance with the facts, since they had been dictated by the military authorities who were entrusted with their control." This declaration elicited protests from all the war correspondents in their papers, but it did not keep them from going to receive instructions every day at the Military Press Bureau.

As a matter of fact, they never saw the front line trenches; the furthest they ever got was Divisional Headquarters. Here they were invited to lunch by the commandant, who gave them information suitable for publication. They also received invitations from army commanders, who were glad to grant an interview, in order to obtain publicity.

The military journalists, who were always reconnoitring for the sake of their bellies, then launched into flattering appreciations of the General's confidence, his high opinion of the value of his troops, and the high level of their energy and *moral*.

Messrs. the war correspondents were far from knowing the

## War Correspondents of the German Press

benefits of liberty of the Press, and the admirable independence of the real journalist. They were placed under the surveillance of the Secret Field Police because, early on in the war, one of them had contrived by roundabout ways to pass on information from the front to neutral journalists. This correspondent was sent away for spying.

Rittmeister von Buntzen, who in time of peace was a Berlin merchant, was the head of the war correspondents' organization and formed the liaison between the war correspondents and the Staff. All articles were sent to him for censoring, before they were published. It was he, too, who decided which section of the front the correspondents might visit for their studies.

Correspondents of Austrian, Turkish, Bulgarian and neutral papers passed through Charleville, but they only stayed a few days at most. The neutral ones, who represented Germanophile papers, lived apart from their German colleagues. They were supposed to advertise the General Staff abroad, and were taken to certain portions of the front where they could give free rein to their admiration for the invincible German army. Amongst the best known of these were the Swiss Colonels Wilte, Muller and Egli, the military critics of the *Berne Bund*, the *Zürich Journal* and the *Neueste Basler Nachrichten*, whose articles were the delight of the French General Staff and the occupied regions.

Amongst the war correspondents who stayed in Charleville till March, 1918, we should single out for special mention Herr Scheuermann, the correspondent of the *Rhenish-Westphalian Gazette*, the Pan-German organ of Krupp's firm at Essen, of the reptile-like *Strassburger Post* (the *Strassburg Post*) and the *Strassburger Neue Zeitung* (The New Journal of Strassburg).

Scheuermann was the son of a German employee in the offices of the Ministry of Finance at Strassburg, and nephew of a departmental chief of the *Statthalter*. After quarrelling with his father, this immigrant—for the Alsatians would never own him—had started his career in Strassburg as a reporter, whilst still at school. He worked for the *Neueste Nachrichten* (German), the *Post* (an official organ) and the *Elsässer*, the journal of the Alsatian Centre. It was as art critic on this

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

last paper that Scheuermann made a name for himself ; he contributed to it from 1901 to 1905. At this period he did not show any signs of Pan-German tendencies. His hatred vented itself upon Alsatian liberalism. From 1903 on Scheuermann was attached to the Great Agrarian League (*Bund der Landwirte*) ; he became the editor of the *Deutsche Tagezeitung*, the chief organ of the League, which he represented with the German Peace Delegation at Versailles.\* Amongst all the correspondents attached to the army, Scheuermann proved himself the most ingenious and politic—since he declared in 1916 that the town of Lille, which he called *Ryssel*, wished to remain German, and in a little guide to Mézières and Charleville, unchristened this latter town, in order to call it *Karlstadt*.

Scheuermann was hoping to publish pamphlets on the war after peace was declared. He is well equipped for the task, since he saw and heard a good deal. During the occupation he wrote an historical German guide to Mézières and Charleville for the series published by the *Gazette des Ardennes*. The public and municipal libraries were opened for him, so that he might consult their documents. Amongst his descriptions is one of the National monument in memory of the Ardennes soldiers who laid down their lives for their country in 1870-1871. He denounced this as a monument of hatred, and declared its destruction to be imperative. He was obeyed by the *Kommandantur*, which, on 27th February, 1918, took advantage of a requisition of metals to melt down Croisy's group, as well as the statue of Bayard at Mézières, the busts of local worthies, and the works of art on the public walks.

Since the war Scheuermann has not dared to return to Alsace, his dear little adopted country. He has taken refuge in Berlin, where he can collect precious documents on the Boche revolution for his forthcoming history of Germany.

Around the person of the correspondent for the *Rhenish-Westphalian Gazette* was a cluster of military critics more modest, but of a totally different order of merit. In the first place Herr Rosner represented the *Berliner Lokal-*

\* Scheuermann is that strange journalist who declared that the German Delegation was surrounded with French spies, and had to be called to order by the Council of Four.



## War Correspondents of the German Press

*anzeiger* (*The Berlin Local Courier*). He enjoyed the respect of the Kaiser, who often invited him to his table and conferred a prominent order on him. He used to accompany William on his journeys, and wrote long articles on the presence of the Emperor amongst his troops at the front. Which is rather humorous when one remembers that Cæsar Imperator did not risk his life in very dangerous parts.

M. Katsch, who prided himself on his Francophile sentiments, and who was none the less a fanatical Pan-Germanist, represented the *Kölnische Zeitung* (*The People's Gazette of Cologne*). He wrote articles on the duties of the war correspondents and their perilous mission at the front (thirty kilometres behind the firing line). His chief military expeditions consisted in the walk from his quarters to the station for the purpose of buying newspapers.

Köster was the special representative of *Vorwärts*, the social-democratic paper of Berlin. He called himself a Socialist, but that did not prevent him from accepting invitations to dine with the Crown Prince. The snake-like Kalkschmidt, whose malicious articles had only one object—to besmirch the reputation of France and its army—belonged to the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (*Frankfort Gazette*). His articles were no more successful with the inhabitants of the invaded regions than the naïve argumentation of the Swiss Colonel Egli.

Herr Professor Doktor Wegener was the delegate of the *Kölnische Zeitung* (*Cologne Gazette*) at G.H.Q. He did not mix much with his colleagues, whom he found vastly inferior to a man of his erudite knowledge. He was almost always seen alone, and his fellow-journalists heartily detested him.

The murderer of Von Buntzen's dog, George Queri, was the correspondent of the *Berliner Tageblatt* (*The Berlin Daily*), a radical opposition paper, which was not in good odour at Court. He is at present in Munich. Finally, there was Herr Doktor Osborn, who was attached to the spiteful *Vossische Zeitung* (*Voss Gazette*).

As for the other journalists, Kieser, Hegeler, Meyer, Zechlin and Diesfurth, they belonged to various journals at Munich,



## **Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters**

Dresden, Stuttgart and Karlsruhe, and were practically unknown.

The reader will not be astonished to hear that these heroes were awarded the Iron Cross. Their docility in obeying the orders of the Military Press Bureau had well earned them this high distinction.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE INFAMOUS "GAZETTE DES ARDENNES," AND THE RENEGADE PRÉVOST

An amusing poster.—The "*Gift*" of the invaded regions.—A Franco-Boche paper is imposed upon us.—An excellent past for an embusqué.—Rittmeister Schnitzer.—A Frenchman from the other side of the Rhine.—The respect for private property.—"Wanted: a French journalist for the *Gazette des Ardennes*."—The reply of the French journalist.—The first German edition.—A Boche who objects to being called a barbarian.—A publisher of pious works.—In front of the house of *Dernières Cartouches*, and behind the tricolour.—The lamentations of Teschemacher.—Incompetent journalists.—Prévost appears on the scene.—The Boche journalists expected war.—Significant incidents at Fanö and Hamburg.—"We shall be in Paris on August 20th."—A Reichstag Deputy discovered to be a spy and shot.—"Fair Fatma."—"Lie down, Prévost."—An Alsatian who wants to remain German.—The Boche of Moosch.—Doktor Prévost.—"Fair Fatma, a dramatist in the service of Germany."—Prévost at Paris.—He remains a German, notwithstanding.—The friend of Karl Eugen Schmidt.—Fear of Guy de Cassagnac, Bourson and Hansi.—The hypocrisy of the renegade.—The traitor at hand.—Schnitzer's man.—A parricide.—The façade changes: a French sign.—An obedient pupil.—A precious ally in the German political offensive.—Shunned like the plague.—Naturalized as a Bavarian.—"Herr Leutnant Prévost."—Smitten with remorse.

IN 1917, the infamous Boche newspaper, which claimed to form French opinion in the occupied districts, had put up illustrated posters; posters, be it added, without any artistic grace. French and Belgian prisoners of war read attentively a newspaper bearing the title of *Gazette des Ardennes*, and the following inscription: "All French and Belgian prisoners read the *Gazette des Ardennes*."

Some anonymous humorist, at the sight of this abomination, had deemed it advisable to paste a German chemist's label over the poster: *Gift* (Poison).

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

This sly wit had summed up in a word the character of this Boche paper, whose object was to poison the minds of the French. Only this method of poisoning, as in the case of Mithridate, brought about just the reverse of its object, for the poison, which was intended to drug the minds of our compatriots, became quite harmless through being administered in gradual doses.

The *Gazette des Ardennes* was the first step in the German political offensive, which was to continue later on the other side of the front, in the shape of active Press propaganda, pamphlets and other defeatist manifestations.

The local papers had stopped publishing, and the well-known Paris papers could no longer reach the occupied districts. Moreover, it was impossible to produce a French newspaper under the occupation, for Headquarters would have required from its editors passive obedience to German orders. The severest prohibitions, the most outrageous threats, were directed against the Press. Anyone who had a French paper in his possession was liable to punishment, under the laws of espionage, and a large number of our compatriots experienced the hardships of confinement for having obtained the Paris newspapers without taking precautions to hide them from the active search of the secret police. In spite of the almost insurmountable obstacles, however, French papers filtered through to the population, and in critical times brought the consolation of the French language. The only trouble was that good news was not always fresh, and that the latest dispatches were generally several weeks old.

In view of the absence of any organ for the information of the French in the occupied districts, the Staff perceived the importance of founding a newspaper, which should propagate the lies of the ultra-Rhenish Press, and present political and military news in a light favourable to Germany, no matter how events might shape in reality.

The Press was always a formidable weapon in its hands, and the distribution of papers was not confined to the ordinary public, with the various sheets from Berlin, Cologne or Frankfurt, whose war correspondents, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, were obediently supposed to write the articles

## The Infamous "Gazette des Ardennes"

ordered by the Military Press Bureau at Headquarters, and showed themselves to be conscientious and well-disciplined soldiers. This propaganda was also carried on amongst the soldiers, and each army possessed its special newspaper, in which *moral* was warmed to a white-heat in view of the slaughter to come. The organ of the Crown Prince's Army was called the *Westfront*, and appeared a few days before the offensives of 1918.

The chief military organ was the *Armee Zeitung* (*Journal of the Army*), which appeared at Charleville. In order to produce it, the printing works of M. Anciaux were requisitioned, and although this owner refused to hand over his machines, the threat of a long term of imprisonment, in addition to a huge fine, obliged him to submit.

The *Armee Zeitung* was a small sheet, half the usual newspaper size, and was printed in German. It published the German *communiqués*, some reviews of the great Boche victories and a few deeds of valour by the *Feldgrauen*. This ephemeral publication, which was distributed over the whole front, did not last long. It made way for other army journals, which we have alluded to above.

But these publications did not accomplish the object which the Staff had in mind. They did not reach the civil population, which, in the main, was ignorant of German, and could not relish the humbug in the *Kölnische* or *Frankfurter Zeitung*. It was at this moment, when Headquarters was installed at Charleville, that the creation of the *Gazette des Ardennes* was decided on.

Rittmeister of the Reserve Schnitzer, Adjutant of the Second-in-Command and Lieutenant-Colonel von Hahnke were entrusted with the production of the new paper.

Schnitzer was born at Mannheim (Grand-Duchy of Baden), and came from Darmstadt. He was Rittmeister in a Dragoon regiment, garrisoning that city. He had been a coffee merchant in Rotterdam, and was well known in the ports of Antwerp, Bordeaux and Havre, especially in Havre, where, he said, he made frequent and lengthy stays. His great ambition was to ape the French officers, whose slenderness and elegance he believed he possessed. His travels in France



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

had given him a certain familiarity with our language, and slang and certain low catch-phrases, which he did not always bring in happily. Brutal, like all Germans, he had made himself detested by horsewhipping some young men who had failed to salute him, by insulting the people, who feared to speak to him, and by persecuting all honest folk, especially honest women, who refused to submit to his whims. Although he always made a show of indomitable bravery, it was in fear and trembling that he set out to make his short stays at the front, or, rather, in the vicinity of the front, for he took good care to keep away from the danger zone, where a shell or a bullet might injure his precious skin.

With his passion for luxury, he had settled down in a very spacious house in the Avenue de la Gare, for which he professed but little respect. Not only had he made it the usual scene of his debauches, but he plundered it shamelessly to boot.

The reader will understand that, under these circumstances, he found G.H.Q. a vastly more pleasant place to stay in than the trenches.

That is why he specially welcomed the offer to found a Boche journal printed in French. The position of an embusqué just suited his temperament. But the matter did not end with merely undertaking to create a French paper; it had to be edited, and although he spoke our language fairly fluently, he was not well enough versed in its subtleties to deceive the reader about its origin. It was necessary to find French editors at any price.

We must ask the reader's permission to mention here a personal fact, which we think it useful to stress, in order to bring out the mentality of the Boche.

On October 27th, 1914, Rittmeister Schnitzer, booted and spurred, with a riding crop in his hand, appeared in the Municipal Council Chamber, at the Charleville Town Hall, in order to inform the municipality of the German authorities' desire to publish a newspaper in French, devoted to giving the German *communiqués* and local news for the benefit of the inhabitants. For this paper, he said, he required an editor, or, rather, an adapter, whose task would be to put into French

## The Infamous "Gazette des Ardennes"

the translations made by himself, who would be the manager of the journal.

He asked, in the presence of our colleagues, if there was not a certain Domelier, who, at the outbreak of war, was editing a French paper, the *Dépêche des Ardennes*. On receiving an answer in the affirmative, Schnitzer laid bare the object of his visit. What was wanted was a collaborator for a French newspaper, and the German authorities, who knew us to be a newspaper man, had asked us to take up the editorship of this organ.

Of course we refused the invitation. And then Schnitzer, like a true Boche, reckoned that by conjuring up the vision of self-interest, he could bring us to accept his favourable terms, and he proposed a very attractive salary. He met with a refusal still more determined and categorical.

The dapper officer, whose violent temper was now getting the better of him, could stand it no longer. In haughty tones he cried out: "So you refuse, sir. Very well. We shall see whether you will not accept." It was an undisguised threat, and Schnitzer left the town hall, banging the doors behind him.

Next he approached our fellow journalist, M. Charles Puel, secretary to the editorial staff of the *Petit Ardennais*, and then M. Aristide Lenel, director of the *Socialiste Ardennais* and municipal councillor, but he had no more success with them than he had with us. Adjutant von Hahnke did not know French journalists, but he may have learnt the force of the sacred union from those he met at Charleville.

Weary of the chase, the founder of the new journal got into touch with an insurance agent, and former professor, M. Georges, who gave a similar reply. But this unfortunate gentleman paid for his courageous refusal, and paid dearly. Some time later he was convicted of having several Paris papers in his possession, amongst them *L'Echo de Paris*, and of sending letters to his family in uninvaded France. He was accused of espionage and sentenced to twelve years' hard labour. This martyr was not to see the day of liberation for his country, for we learnt that he had died from grief and misery in prison a few days before the Armistice.

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

And so Schnitzer could not count on the support of the local press. He decided to edit the *Gazette* independently and to associate with himself two non-coms. from the *Kommandantur*, called Gaspari and Teschemacher, who, like himself, spoke French fairly correctly and thought they could write it adequately. The first number of the *Gazette des Ardennes* appeared on November 1st, 1914. The edition consisted of 4,000 copies. It had the same format and type as the *Armee Zeitung* and was also printed at the requisitioned works of M. Anciaux. Like the *Armee Zeitung*, the *Gazette des Ardennes*, which began as a weekly, published the German Staff *communiqué*. The rest of the paper was made up of reviews of events—and in what a style! Praises of the German nation and the slogan of “Deutschland über Alles,” and articles showing the intellectual inferiority of the French. This first *Gazette* invariably concluded with coarse insults against the French Press, and a regular protest against the epithets “Boche” and “Barbarian” which were being fastened on to the Germans.

However, notwithstanding its form, which Gaspari tried to keep correct, the mentality of the Boche revealed itself in every word, and the public did not fall into the clumsy trap which had been prepared for it. The *Gazette* did not sell.

The edition never reached 6,000 copies, even including the returns: it was a fiasco.

What kind of people, by the way, were the accomplices of Rittmeister Schnitzer?

Gaspari (born in the neighbourhood of Hanover) was manager of a chemical products works in Berlin, who, it was said, had married a Frenchwoman. The tale went that he had stayed for some time in France as well as Italy and had perfected himself in our language. Big, heavy, with the features of a pig, he was a perfect type of the Pan-German brute.

The word barbarian used to exasperate him, and every time he heard the expression, he went into mad fits of fury. This epithet was the *leitmotiv* of his everlasting refrain: “It is not we who are the barbarians.” He had made himself detested by everybody on account of his intolerable pride and self-satisfaction.



## The Infamous "Gazette des Ardennes"

His colleague Teschemacher was more skilful and adaptable. He had been a bookseller and publisher at Treves. As a protégé of Cardinal Hartmann, the notorious Archbishop of Cologne, who had paid for the expenses of his education, he had studied, so he told us, at the boarding-school in Momignies (Belgium). According to his account, every year Teschemacher used to make the pilgrimage to Bazeilles with the other pupils of the school, and, under the Tricolour of the French flag, salute the dead of 1870, and visit the house of *Dernières Cartouches*.

As he was a member of the school band, he played the "Marseillaise" in front of the crypt, and marched through the streets of Charleville to the strains of the "Sambre-et-Meuse," trumpeting "The Salute to the Colours" before the National Monument in the city, which was stolen by the Barbarians in 1918.

Did he tell the truth when he made himself out to be an old boy of Momignies? It is hardly probable, for the head master of the school, who did not particularly care to have had such an undesirable pupil, stated in writing that he had never belonged to the school, and that they had not been able to find his name in the school records. One thing is obvious : Teschemacher had certainly studied in France ; his comparatively polished manners and his education proved it. The firm of Teschemacher used to publish classical works in German and French and did a certain amount of business in France and Belgium. The war was even a subject of regret for him ; his turnover would suffer as a result of it !

Teschemacher did not use the violent methods of his friend Gaspari. He did not employ the authoritative tone which pleased this latter gentleman. His thin voice was more caressing, his manners more insinuating. He tried to make his way into families by doing little services, and in his conversation he took good care not to irritate patriotic susceptibilities ; but all these efforts came to grief before the clear-sightedness of those whose confidence he sought.

Better instruments had to be found if the ineffectiveness and failure of Headquarters' enterprise were not to be admitted. There was only one way to improve the situation, by



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

changing the editorial staff and adapting its methods to French customs. The difficulty was to find the wretch who would accept the infamous task of poisoning occupied France.

But Schnitzer had such a man handy. Prévost, the renegade, was waiting for his cue. He arrived towards the beginning of 1915. He was not unknown to us.

The International Congress of the Press was held in 1914, at Copenhagen. It lasted from June 8th to 15th. Even at that date tendencies were clearly defined. The journalists of the Entente and of the Central Powers adopted separate positions. We recall an event, which, although it has no connection with the infamous *Gazette*, has an importance of its own, and we think it our duty to report it in the interests of the history of the war.

On June 18th some of the representatives at the congress happened to be at Fanö, a little island situated on the West Coast of Jutland, a popular Danish seaside resort, close to which the famous naval battle of Skager-Rack took place, when "Copusse's" fleet tasted the bitterness of defeat, which its Admiralty camouflaged into decisive victory for the benefit of the German Michel.

After lunch the journalists were in the lounge of the Hydro, and French, British, Belgians, Italians, Russians and Portuguese were chatting with each other, while the Germans, Austrians, Turks and Bulgarians formed a group apart.

At this moment a Budapest journalist passed by and remarked to our face :

"Here are the French beginning to talk about revenge."

As we called his attention to the fact that it was not proper to speak of revenge in friendly professional gatherings, the Hungarian brutally replied :

"You're wrong, and in less than two months you'll have reason to talk about it."

Now, the murder of the Archduke and Heir-Apparent Franz-Ferdinand at Sarajevo, the pretext for the Austro-Serbian war, was only committed on June 29th, that is, eleven days after this conversation. As we have seen, the eventuality of an imminent war was already present in the mind of the Central Powers' Press.

## The Infamous "Gazette des Ardennes"

Another incident of the same kind occurred at the same place, on the same occasion. Another journalist at the congress, M. Armand Ségaud, a talented painter of military subjects, was also present at Copenhagen, and there made the acquaintance of Prévost. M. Ségaud, after the activities of the congress, had taken advantage of his stay in Scandinavia to conclude his journey by a visit to Norway and Sweden. On his return, he met Prévost at Copenhagen, who gave him a recommendation to a friend at Hamburg.

The travellers passed through the great naval base of Kiel, and visited the Navy docks. M. Ségaud wanted to take some photos of the docks, but his guide prevented him with a gesture of displeasure, reminding him that it was forbidden to take photographs which might jeopardize the national defence of Germany.

On reaching Hamburg, the French painter was taken by Prévost's friend, a man by the name of Hermann Laube, to all the popular resorts of the place. Naturally, the two conversed, and M. Ségaud asked his companion if he knew Paris.

"No," replied Laube, "but we shall be going there shortly."

Laube took his guest to the Trocadéro, a pleasure resort in the great German port, and champagne was opened in the company of the young *viveurs* of the city. One of them cried: "This German champagne is not as good as the champagne of France—that is true. But, wait a bit: we shall be drinking it before long."

Then the conversation turned to Paris. It evoked the same old chorus:

"We shall be coming to see you soon in Paris."

"When will that be?" said M. Ségaud, who was far from thinking about war.

"About August 20th," they replied in unison.

Our fellow countryman left Hamburg, and Laube promised to return him the visit.

The Boche kept his promise, came to Paris a few days before the diplomatic crisis and visited the military painter's studio, promising that on his next visit he would bring his Dragoon's uniform, with helmet, sabre and top-boots. In the mean-

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

time, he told how his father owned a factory at Aubervilliers, 30, Rue Saint-Denis, in partnership with another Boche by the name of Rosenthaler. Laube Senior was also a Deputy in the Reichstag, and used to visit Paris every fortnight. His son Hermann had come to Paris without telling him about it, and could not stay more than a couple of days. And, as a matter of fact, on the 18th a telegram came calling urgently for his return. The German mobilization was secretly under way. Laube Senior remained in Paris, in order, as he said, to wind up his affairs ; but he evidently had another mission, for we were told that on the first day of the mobilization he was caught just as he was going to blow up the railway bridge at Saint-Denis. The tale went that he was even shot for his attempt.

This last incident goes to show that, notwithstanding the declarations of the *Gazette des Ardennes*, war had been decided on several months previously in Germany, and that Prévost, at Copenhagen, was a German agent trailing the French journalists, who did not mix much with their colleagues from the other side of the Rhine. Prévost had wormed his way into the ranks of the French Press, where he had immediately drawn attention by his obsequiousness towards the prominent members of the profession. And certainly the figure of this fat little fellow, skipping about like a fish, cutting capers as he walked, and always ready to oblige, was a familiar one. His queer behaviour had immediately aroused comment, and he was soon nicknamed " Fair Fatma."

He cultivated the prominent journalists more than anyone. Messrs. Jean Ajalbert, the learned manager of the National Works at Beauvais, and Albert Wilm, formerly Deputy for Levallois, to mention only two, must remember him well, for he was always at their heels like a little dog.

He became such a nuisance that Messrs. Ajalbert and Wilm were obliged to hint that he had better stop speaking to them—so dubious did his manner seem. One incident had impressed them particularly.

The German railways had refused the visitors to the congress the same facilities for travelling that had been granted by all the other companies, French, Danish, Swedish, or Norwegian.



## The Infamous "Gazette des Ardennes"

The French journalists mentioned this to some Boche colleagues, in the presence of Prévost, and Prévost was most obliging, for, at the end of the journey, he brought free passes on condition that the journalists returned home by way of the Leipzig and Cologne exhibitions.

The renegade, who used to wear a large red-white-and-blue ribbon in his buttonhole, was very proud of being a member of the French delegation. He did not miss a single occasion of showing himself off, and a photograph in the *Monde Illustré* of that date shows him in the front row, facing the camera, in front of the monument to the Princess Waldemar, daughter of the Duc de Chartres, before which the French Press had laid a wreath of flowers tied with a ribbon in the national colours.

He used to boast loudly of his Alsatian origin, but he made himself the champion of a Franco-German *entente*. According to him, France could not hope to resist Germany, which could crush it when it wanted. And so it was better to be friends with fair-haired Germania than undergo the shame of another 1870. And, finally, he was voluble in his sarcasm for those Frenchmen who maintained that there could never be a compromise on the Alsace-Lorraine question. These provinces, said Prévost, were absolutely German, and did not wish to become French again.

Apart from all this, he worshipped France and loved to brag about his high-placed friends in Paris. His behaviour was so outrageous that more than once he had to be reminded of the laws of decency and good breeding.

Some months after we saw his plump form in the streets of Charleville, cutting capers and obsequious as usual, but this time he was not in the company of literary or political notabilities. He seemed to prefer the society of German officers.

This little fellow, with his bilious complexion, his sidelong, shifty look, was the same Prévost who had been the delegate of the Paris Committee of Associated Foreign Correspondents at the Congress of Copenhagen; the same Prévost who, in December, 1915, came to take over the publication of the vile *Gazette des Ardennes*.

Several French papers have made the mistake of stating



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

that the renegade Prévost was born at Saint-Quentin ; others declared that he had taken out naturalization papers before the war and worked on the staff of some newspapers in the east of France.

Nothing of the kind. This miserable creature never belonged to any paper, nor to any association in the Departments on our Eastern frontier.

Prévost was born at Moosch, near Saint-Amarin, where his father was still living when the French army occupied that attractive region of the Vosges. Prévost is a traitor, and a traitor of the deepest dye, for he was not an Alsatian, and, therefore, not a German subject, when he applied for Bavarian citizenship. He had been accepted again as a French citizen. In this way he had been able to send his venomous Paris correspondence to the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, without fear of being expelled. This fact had been brought to the attention of the public before the war, notably in the November, 1913, number of that fine review, *Les Marches de l'Est* (page 93).

That is why, if he had been accepted as a French national, he is liable for the crime of high treason. His naturalization as a Bavarian only dates from 1917, and his appearance in the *Gazette des Ardennes* from December, 1914.

We do not wish to probe into the feelings of the father of this miserable creature. We know that he suffered horribly on account of his son's treachery, for he comes of old Alsatian stock, and not only has he relatives in the French army, but he also sent his son to the school at Belfort.

However, if the Boche-to-be received his secondary education at a French school, he took his university course at Munich, where he probably graduated as some kind of doctor—a very easy achievement in Germany—for in Boche circles he was always addressed as "Herr Doctor Prévost."

People had made up their minds about him in Strassburg. A well-known citizen draws this hardly flattering portrait : "This gentleman was considered in Strassburg circles to be a nondescript and a charlatan. You would always see him hobnobbing with Germans. His wife, a certain Anita, he had picked up in a low-down German restaurant, where she used to sing with a troupe of Tyrolese girls. She died of

## The Infamous "Gazette des Ardennes"

poisoning at Munich. Prévost must have passed through days of hardship. His family had broken with him altogether. His father was absolutely French in his opinions. He made his bread and butter by reporting; later, he passed himself off as a champion of French ideas in Alsace-Lorraine, which was enough to sell his pamphlets. Later, he interested himself specially in the education of girls by nuns, which he attacked, accusing these latter of being French at heart. Those who had known Prévost, superficial and lazy as he was, though capable of great facility when anything interested him for the moment, were rather surprised to see him tricked out with the title of 'Doctor.' According to his own version, he owed this distinction to Professor Hugo Brentano.

"At Strassburg Prévost had tried the drama, and produced some colourless and artificial pieces in collaboration with his student-friend, Hans Karl Abel, son of a German forester, who died in Germany, and of an Alsatian woman (from Requewihr). This Mr. Abel was responsible for most of the propaganda with which Switzerland was bombarded, with a view to enlisting the sympathies of neutrals and Alsatians in Switzerland for the German cause.

"During the war Prévost had disappeared completely from view. But when it was found out shortly after what kind of work he was engaged on, nobody was surprised, for it was well known that he was utterly lacking in self-respect, in character, in everything which distinguishes Alsatian character, except, perhaps, the ability to express himself in two languages—a sign, in his case, of rather doubtful tendencies. No one would be surprised if Prévost were to publish to-morrow a declaration of faith, informing the world that, at bottom, he had really been serving France all the time—in the service of Germany."

After working on the staff of several Bavarian papers and writing some cautious articles in Alsatian organs, he migrated to Paris some ten years ago, as correspondent for the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* (*The Latest News of Munich*).

He took rooms in 24, Rue Norwins, in the XVIIIth Arrondissement.

Once he was in Paris, his genius for intrigue got the better

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

of him again. He succeeded in worming his way into political and parliamentary circles, and tried to insinuate himself into the antechambers of the French newspaper offices. When he became a member of the Association of Foreign Correspondents, he soon secured a place on the committee.

However, in spite of his shameless manœuvres to obtain standing with the French Press, in spite of his protestations of loyalty as an Alsatian, and his affection for France, he frequented all the pre-war Boche resorts. There he became an active worker for Pan-Germanism, and with his pen prepared the ground for the invasion of France.

Amongst his friends was Karl Eugen Schmidt, the Paris correspondent of a Pan-German Strassburg paper, the *Strassburger Post*, who showed his gratitude to his French colleagues by flinging mud at our country in the columns of his paper. The reader may remember how the late Guy de Cassagnac sent him his witnesses, and how, in his fear, the coward managed to avoid a duel by putting the frontier between himself and his adversary.

René Prévost was one of his witnesses, and, as such, was obliged to sign a document certifying that his principal was not present to settle accounts.

Karl Eugen Schmidt had also directed base insults against Alsace and the Alsatians. Our brave Strassburg colleague, M. Paul Bourson, editor of the *Nouvelliste d'Alsace-Lorraine* of Colmar, correspondent of the *Matin*, and President of the Association of the Strassburg Press, whose Francophil attitude led to his confinement in the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein, and the Colmar draughtsman, Hansi, who have been rewarded by the Cross of Honour for their long sufferings, tried to obtain satisfaction. But, as with Guy de Cassagnac, Karl Eugen did not wait for his adversaries, and his chief witness, Prévost, was obliged to admit the disappearance of his principal and friend once again.

Always underhand and hypocritical in his methods, the renegade did not hesitate to sign in July, 1914, when the Caillaux trial was in progress, a protest of the Association of Foreign Correspondents in regard to the disgraceful campaign carried on by the Boche correspondents against a country



## The Infamous "Gazette des Ardennes"

which was giving them such open hospitality. Prévost was clever enough to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds.

The Paris representative of the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* also contributed, though not for long, to the *Express*, a newspaper in French, which was published at Mulhouse.

In this way he paved the way for an entry into the Alsatian press, where he intended to play the part of *agent provocateur*.

The *Express* is a highly-respected paper at Mulhouse. Its editor, M. Bader, a Swiss subject, has always maintained a correct attitude, in conformity with Alsatian opinion.

However, if we are to go by certain local information, M. Bader was thinking of retiring from the management of the paper, and it was whispered that the Strassburg Government was going to take it over and make it an official organ, written in French. After M. Bader's retirement, it would have been a predecessor to the *Gazette des Ardennes*.

The new editor, of course, would have to be a disreputable character, who would not shrink from any kind of work, even the most shameless, and Prévost was just the man that was wanted. That is why, the tale goes, he was picked out, and would have accepted the proposition which was put before him if war had not broken out. French-language newspapers were then prohibited in Alsace and Lorraine, and the *Express* ceased to appear, together with its confiscated contemporaries.

The traitor waited for another opportunity to serve Germany: it was not long before it appeared.

The campaign had begun. The frontiers of the North and North-East had been crossed, and the Ardennes were completely cut off from the civilized world. At this point we lose trace of René Prévost. Did he stay on for a while in Paris, or did he make for Germany or Switzerland immediately on the declaration of war? We cannot tell. We understand, however, that he corresponded regularly with uninvaded France through the intermediary of a French prisoner. We have even been assured that he managed to penetrate into France during the war. There is nothing impossible about it, for officers from Headquarters, and a Boche police-woman, Marie-Louise Garnier, contrived to do the same.

Whatever Prévost did between the declaration of the war



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

and the day he started on the *Gazette* is not very important, after all. He had sold himself to the Boches, and had only to obey. That is what he did, when Rittmeister Schnitzer, recognizing the ineffectiveness of the Gaspari-Teschemacher editorship, asked for an all-round man, with more knowledge of French journalism than his two Teuton compatriots.

It was a lucky day for the German Staff when it took on Prévost. The Celtic origin of his father's ancestors, the French education which he received in early youth in Paris, in the Alsatian *milieu* where he was born, at school and with his relatives in France—all this had opened his eyes to French refinement and elegance.

It must be admitted that he wrote correctly ; his articles had a certain lightness of touch which is characteristic of our Press. But the University of Munich had moulded his mind after the pattern of Boche mentality, with its hypocrisy, its falseness, and its love of distorting the truth in favour of German superiority, and, as a great French review very justly remarked, with its marked partiality for hair-splitting and sophistry. It may be said of him, that though he wrote French fairly well, he always thought in German. His prose did not have the ponderous massiveness of the interminable sentences of German prose, but his arguments bore the mark of that proud and windy rhetoric characteristic of ultra-Rhenish philosophy. On this subject we are in agreement with our colleague, M. Eugène Thébaud, who devoted a number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* to the infamous *Gazette*. "This outcast of journalism, this scribbler ready for any meanness, had only one sincere emotion—and a monstrous one it was : his ingratitude towards his real country, his hatred for his native land, which he always concealed beneath a show of sympathy, in a language which the invaded population could read, but which their staunch patriotism could never understand.

"Instead of a coarse hempen cord, this parricide used a silken cord to throttle France.

"With his advent the façade changed : the sign over the shop might deceive the customer, but the firm was the same. Schnitzer continued to be the nominal head of the establish-

## The Infamous "Gazette des Ardennes"

ment, and Gaspari and Teschemacher departmental chiefs. René Prévost was simply the employé who was instructed to stick French labels on the goods that were 'made in Germany,' so as to deceive the customers of the occupied regions."

However, it must not be thought that the journalist-viper enjoyed the splendid independence of French journalists on his paper. Freedom was even more of a stranger in the outrageous *Gazette* than in the German Press. His part was that of a good student of philosophy, who was given subjects to write about. His exercises were submitted to the Censor, for the Franco-Boche sheet was also subject to the caprices of Lady Anastasia, and the Herr Censor Professor would return it after correction with the fair copy.

Prévost was nothing but an excellent writing machine, entrusted with the task of faithfully reproducing the opinions of the Chancellory or the Staff.

It was he who wrote the leaders, with a certain amount of skill, it must be admitted, publishing his articles sometimes without any signature, as if they were those of the editorial staff, sometimes under the pseudonym of an American citizen, or an English patriot, or a Frenchwoman in the occupied districts, or a far-seeing prisoner of war.

He skilfully avoided all arguments which might recoil on Germany, and presented the political and military acts of the Entente as detrimental to the interests of the Allied peoples. The good apostle wept for the misfortunes of Belgium and France, which he loved above himself, and whose terrible future, as a result of the mistakes of their Governments, he foresaw. If we were to believe him, the submission of these two countries to a victorious Germany—the only possible result—would be the beginning of another Golden Age for us.

And so Prévost, the renegade, was a useful ally in the German political offensive in the occupied areas, which, however, never succeeded in disturbing the unwavering confidence of the invaded regions in the ultimate triumph of France.

The physical appearance of the *Gazette* was French, but no one fell into the trap. However, although everyone saw through the knavery of the writer, there were ignorant people who insisted on giving him credit for his qualities as a

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

journalist, and in this they often went too far, for Prévost was never considered to be anything more than a mediocre publicist by the bulk of the French Intelligentsia.

After all, it was not very hard for him to pose as an important politician in a country where all opposition and replies were strictly prohibited.

Almost immediately on his arrival at Charleville, Prévost, whose complacency and conceit knew no bounds, tried to make friends with the French, but the reception he met with discouraged him. It was counter to our native loyalty and sincerity to receive a traitor and a renegade. He was never able to shake a friendly hand ; indeed, it was hard to keep oneself from spitting at him. Even the German war correspondents, who, as a rule, were not very particular about the choice of their friends, avoided him whenever they could, and, except for his colleagues of the *Gazette* and his table-companions at the "Salon des Familles," which was turned into a military club, he had to be content with the company of the Alsatian immigrant, Scheuermann, whom we have already introduced to the reader in the course of these pages.

René Prévost's situation became falser every day. He did not disguise the fact. He was also aware that in spite of her gigantic efforts in the field, Germany would end by being defeated, and Alsace and Lorraine would become French once again.

Now, after this treachery, he could not own his real nationality, for in that case the course of justice would have been able to put him up against a wall in Vincennes. That is why he applied for Bavarian citizenship. It was granted him under the date of January 1st, 1918, so that on December 31st, 1917, he was to be seen marching up and down the Place de la Gare in the uniform of a Bavarian lieutenant, just as a repatriation train was about to leave for free France.

Since then the renegade has probably gone in fear and trembling of well-deserved punishment, for he changed visibly, and when he left Charleville on October 24th, for Frankfort-on-the-Main, where the publication and printing of the *Gazette* had been transferred, he was only the shadow of his former self.



## CHAPTER XVII]

### THE POISON LABORATORY

The beginnings of the infamous *Gazette*—What's bred in the bone . . .—The big drum.—Prévost has a look round.—Changed in form but the same at bottom.—Speculation in misfortune.—Crocodile tears.—Business is business.—Slight deviations from the truth.—Tender solicitude for refugees.—Invention of the local news column.—A "latest news" which is not the latest.—The public does not bite, and an unparalleled scheme to make it do so.—The *Gazette* of the liars.—Progress reduced to its right perspective.—The *Gazette* removes.—Matter that is easy to procure.—Concealed malice.—One way of settling with the "Association of Men of Letters."—Victims of the war.—Factory thieves.—The "Album of the Great War."—English barbarity and Boche culture.—The *Illustrated Gazette*.—Circulation secrets.—The brave Boches !—Wezel comes on the scene again.—The composition of the various numbers.—The deportations from the north.—The way favourable testimonials were obtained.—A burglar of libraries and a plagiarist of poems.—The *Gazette Almanach*.—To demoralize the English, Americans and Russians.

THE first number of the *Gazette des Ardennes* is dated November 1st, 1914. Four thousand copies were printed. The editorial staff was purely German and the reader perceived this fact in the very first sentence. Schnitzer and Gaspari could not throw off the old habits in spite of all the knowledge of the French language that they claimed. Boche turns of speech and inversions swarmed in their sentences, the lightness of which was enough to make the biggest blockhead in the Kaiser's Army green with envy. According to its founders the need for the *Gazette* was making itself felt in the occupied regions, and this need is clearly exposed by a statement of the paper's principles inserted in the first number.



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

### " TO THE POPULATION

" The desire often rightly expressed by the population of the departments occupied by the German Army for news from abroad has in itself prompted the creation of this newspaper.

" Owing to the regrettable and unjustifiable departure, at the commencement of hostilities, of certain persons who could have collaborated with us in our task, we have been obliged to defer its publication until now.

" To-day all serious obstacles seem to have been overcome and we have decided to publish this first number.

" To facilitate its distribution as far as possible, we hope we may rely upon the military authorities and the goodwill of the public.

" The war news which will appear in these columns will be taken from the official messages of the Wolff Bureau, and of the German G.H.Q., which can be considered absolutely correct and trustworthy.

" Apart from these telegrams, the paper will reproduce extracts from the most recent German, French and English papers. We shall also publish news from neutral publications, such as those of Switzerland and Holland.

" The *Gazette des Ardennes* will rigorously abstain from inserting any false news such as is so frequently retailed and with which certain newspapers are so often filled.

" Above all, we must avoid an ink-and-paper war, which in some cases is worse than a pitched battle where enemies defend themselves man to man according to the laws of warfare and the traditions of nations.

" Whilst some can prove the truth of their information by facts which they themselves have witnessed, there are, nevertheless, certain organizers in this gigantic struggle which, finding themselves well protected and giving the heaviest part of the work to their allies and vassal troops from Asia and Africa, scatter abroad false news which the public readily believes, but against which it is well to be on one's guard.

## The Poison Laboratory

"We shall reproduce the precise facts, and not imaginary facts, for although it is human to believe what one hopes for, it is necessary to find out the truth, whatever it may be.

"The sole aim of this newspaper is, therefore, to make known the course of events in all sincerity, and we hope that we shall be doing useful work thereby."

The first five numbers were produced without Prévost's collaboration. His first article did not appear until No. 6, on the 13th of December, 1914; its title was: *Allemands et Français* (Germans and French), and was nothing but a tissue of gross insults directed against the press of our country.

Prévost brought with him to the *Gazette* his professional experience. At first glance, the little paper did not attract the eye; it had a paltry look. He studied the local papers, and after examining several of them adopted the same form, the same type and the same make-up as a weekly paper printed by M. Anciaux. The border was identically the same. Only, the word *Gazette* was substituted for the title.

The large size *Gazette des Ardennes* appeared on April 2nd, 1915, being the thirty-fifth issue of the paper.

The new *Gazette* did not arouse much curiosity. In spite of its French appearance, and although the leading articles were adroitly camouflaged with hypocritical sympathy for poor France, which was so unhappy under her government, and, moreover, the unfortunate victim of the machiavellian machinations of perfidious Albion, it did not sell.

Then the traitor had an inspiration.

The occupied regions of France were cut off from the rest of the world. The population could get neither letters nor papers from the rest of France except under the severest penalties. Parents who had no news about their mobilized sons were tormented by anxiety. Any information about the fate of their *poilus* would certainly be a means of selling the Boche rag. It could be done, and the editor was equal to the occasion. He obtained permission to publish the names of the prisoners of war and their lists.

The circulation increased, and in a few weeks it rose from 4,000 copies to 14,000.

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

The publication of these lists had two good results ; firstly, to reassure all families thus concerned ; secondly, to prove the knavery of the Boche. The first list appeared in No. 35, April 2nd, 1915. It opened with an appeal to the French population, printed in big letters, that ran as follows :

" The French Government continues its efforts to deceive the people, the whole world and possibly itself as to the real state of affairs. It is inventing victories which were never won ; it is hiding losses which have been incontestably inflicted.

" This tendency was most plainly manifest on the occasion of the first exchange of invalid prisoners . . . when the French Government concealed the convoys of seriously wounded men, in order to keep the public in ignorance of many events which have hitherto been concealed and distorted.

" The same game is being carried on with regard to the prisoners of war.

*" And all this, because the vanity of the French Government will not allow it to make this plain, straightforward admission : we have lost 250,000 prisoners in German hands, regardless of other losses.*

" Well and good. We shall try to repair this negligence on the part of the French Government, which dare not confess the truth to the people who are sacrificing their sons for official policy.

" To this end we shall begin to-day the publication of the list of the 250,000 French prisoners of war who are in Germany. This will later be followed by a list of French officers and men buried on the field of battle in occupied territory by German troops, and of those who have died in German hospitals.

" In undertaking this task, it is our wish to give to the French population an explanation of the facts which is as imperative as any humanitarian duty."

And, since the commercial factor was not to be excluded, a supplement containing the lists was sold at the rate of ten centimes a number with supplement, and five centimes the supplement alone. Nevertheless, the aim was not achieved, for a large number of persons bought the lists only,



## The Poison Laboratory

and did not ask for the real *Gazette*. This is why the last supplement made its appearance with No. 88 on Oct. 3rd, 1915.

In order to swell the number of French prisoners and to produce an exaggerated and false total, names of many prisoners were given several times over. It happened that we found in one list the name of a colonial infantry officer of high rank, who was included in several camps as lieutenant-colonel, lieutenant, sergeant and corporal.

Better still, officers who were still valiantly doing their duty at the front were reported as captured. The *Echo de Paris* exposed this fraud by publishing a letter which M. Maurice Barrès had received from a *poilu*. This letter stated that a German aviator had dropped some copies of the *Gazette*. The *poilu* wrote :

"Imagine our amazement ! A colossal list of French prisoners . . . a large number of officers, especially colonials ! And among them our captain, who has not left us since the beginning of the war and who is actually in command of our sector, facing the Bavarians !"

This letter aroused the fury of M. Prévost, who proceeded to vent his wrath upon M. Barrès (his *bête noire*) and the *Echo de Paris* in No. 66 of the *Gazette*, July 18th, 1915.

M. Maurice Barrès was next accused of having invented every word of this letter in the interests of the good cause.

That traitor de Moosch also tried to use this publication to demoralize the invaded territory. He conceived the idea of marking with an asterisk all prisoners who belonged to the occupied regions, and among those latter he included various parts of uninvaded France, such as Beauvais, Compiègne, Amiens, Meaux and even—Paris and Cherbourg.

The French Press did not hesitate to point out this dirty trick. The result was bad temper on the part of this criminal journalist, who, as an excuse, was content to revile the French papers in No. 100, Oct. 31st, 1915, calling them "authors of such a monstrosity, and quite capable of such minor perfidies." He blamed the mistake on the compositors.

Other manoeuvres were also adopted to attract the public. After the publication of the lists of prisoners and soldiers



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

buried in the occupied territories, the good apostle thought of stealing from those local papers which had left the locality and were being published in Paris, such as *le Bulletin Ardennais* and *l'Ardennais*, and of publishing the information concerning the well-being of relations on the other side of the front. This trick was ingenious enough, because correspondence between the two parts of France was strictly forbidden, and both communications addressed to prisoners and the twenty-word messages were most irregular. The *Gazette* was therefore read for news from the Mother-country. The last straw was messages from repatriates and refugees who had arrived in Switzerland or their new exile, and announced that they were well, which was all that they were allowed to state.

However, the sale of the paper progressed but slowly. So, in No. 123, Dec. 24th, 1915, "to respond to the oft-expressed wish of the *Gazette's* readers in the occupied area," Prévost started the "local news" column, which contained at first only news of a purely local character, such as civilian movements, the condition of inhabitants, stories of the invasion in which the kindness of the German soldiers was made out to be proverbial. Gradually the pacifist campaign insinuated itself into the section, and the Toqués, Huberts, Dauphins and other Leroys devoted themselves to it with all their heart.

The paper's make-up did not undergo any change until Sept. 3rd, 1916, when the first agricultural section made its appearance under the title of "Farmer's Corner;" it contained various pieces of advice to people who knew their job better than the Munich doctor, and who were not obliged to follow them, since their horses, cattle, stock and land had been commandeered; in short, they were already compelled by the Kommandantur to work for the King of Prussia by cultivating their land for the benefit of the German Army.

Then a "Latest News" appeared for the first time on Sept. 3rd, 1916; but it was latest news only in name. It consisted of cuttings from the telegrams in the *Cologne Gazette*, which were favourable to Germany and unpleasant to the Entente, and the people of the invaded districts. They were

## The Poison Laboratory

always tendencious in character, and more often than not they lied.

In spite of all these efforts and a "Fashions Column from Berlin via Brussels," the sale did not increase to any great extent. So G.H.Q. ordered the distribution of the paper by force if necessary. A number of orders were issued to the Kommandanturs. The communes were to buy a certain number of copies in proportion to the number of inhabitants. It is true that the mayors who were thus put under an obligation to distribute the infamous newspaper got round the difficulty. They bought the papers but destroyed them on arrival. Newspaper-sellers were requisitioned, especially children. At first these latter had their revenge, for whenever they were going along the streets of Charleville, and were certain of not being understood by the German police, they would shout at the top of their voices: "*La Gazette des menteurs*" (The Liars' Gazette).

This commendable frankness often brought down upon its authors correction in the form of a horsewhipping administered by that brute Schnitzer.

Besides being sold in the occupied areas, this paper was also dispatched by aeroplane, balloon and special projectiles to the French troops on the front, to neutral countries, chiefly Denmark, Holland, Switzerland and Spain, so that it might trickle through into uninvaded France—and it was also bought by Germans and German libraries for collection purposes.

The circulation increased. If we can believe the *Gazette*, No. 100, Oct. 31st, 1915, the occasion of its first anniversary, "it began with a circulation of 4,000; but with No. 3 the edition reached 17,000; of No. 10, 25,000 were printed. At the end of March, 1915, No. 34 had a circulation of 38,000, a figure which was doubled by April 1st as a result of the publication of the first list of prisoners. On Nov. 1st, 1915, the circulation was 82,000."

After No. 274, Oct. 7th, 1916, the paper's title-page bears the number of the circulation: 130,000.

No. 289, Nov. 2nd, 1916: 135,000.

No. 313, Dec. 14th, 1916: 140,000.

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

No. 324, Jan. 3rd, 1917 : 150,000.

No. 341, Feb. 3rd, 1917 : 160,000.

No. 478, Oct. 20th, 1917 : 168,000.

No. 482, Oct. 27th, 1917 : 175,000.

We must not forget that the *Gazette* has several times been taxed with and proved to be lying. But let us suppose that the figures given by the paper are correct, and discuss them on that basis :

Deduct 8,000 copies kept in reserve each issue.

„ 20,000 copies for the front and German collections.

„ 25,000 copies for neutrals.

„ 5,000 copies pulped up again.

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Total 58,000, in round figures 60,000.

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Thus there remain about 115,000 copies to be dropped by aviators, to be distributed to prisoners of war and the inhabitants of the occupied districts. In all probability the sale in the north and north-east of France and in Belgium did not exceed 50,000, which we must admit is large enough.

At first each copy had been sold at five centimes, but after July 1st, 1917, the price was raised to five pfennigs : the paper shortage was raging in Germany as well as everywhere else.

The *Gazette* first appeared twice a week, then three times a week after Oct. 6th, 1915. From April 7th, 1916, to Jan. 4th, 1918, the G.H.Q. journal was issued daily except Monday. It should be added that from Oct. 27th, 1917, onwards, it contained only two pages, except on Sundays, when there were four.

As a result of the development of this depressing organ, the Anciaux Press soon became insufficient for its production. The editorial department, which was installed at the Kommandantur of G.H.Q., where Schnitzer was still Adjutant, and Gaspari and Teschemacher both secretaries, was transferred to the offices of the Nancy Bank, and it stayed there until the whole collection moved to Frankfort. The com-



## The Poison Laboratory

posing rooms were established at the publishing offices of *l'Usine*, belonging to our colleague, Camille Didier, which possessed a completely new set of linotype machines; and the paper was printed at the offices of the *Petit Ardenneais*.

This involuntary collaboration in the production of the notorious news-sheet, since our colleagues were not present to offer any opposition, cost them dear. The choice material that they had was taken to Germany and replaced by machinery stolen elsewhere. Thus M. Georges Corneau found in his offices a new printing press, stolen from Brussels, Roubaix and Lille, and among other things, the great stereotyping machine of the *Réveil du Nord*. A railed track connected with the tramway lines facilitated the delivery of paper.

Trained workmen were requisitioned by force, prisoners were brought back from Germany, and they were compelled to proceed under strict supervision to set up and print this ignoble work of French demoralization.

The paper itself consisted of the leading article, generally written by Prévost, but also by French collaborators, either prisoners of war or inhabitants of the occupied territories, who signed their infamies with an assumed name or some fantastic title. The pen of Régis Huart, alias the Colonial official, Toqué, was most recognizable, and those of Hubert, Dauphin, Rôl, and the various collaborators from the prisoners' camp.

After the leading article came the official German and Austro-Hungarian *communiqués*, followed by the French and English taken from the *Echo de Paris*. Very often there were articles from the Boche General Staff on the operations, either exalting some success, or transforming a serious defeat into a great victory, or an incontestable rearguard success.

Gaspari took charge of the news cuttings, the information for the families of refugees and repatriates, and the "local news."

The foul *Gazette* was constantly flinging mud at the great newspapers of the Parisian Press, and particularly the *Echo de Paris*, but it was obliged to admit that it took news from the latter. On the other hand, it was all honey for the *défaitiste* journalists and deputies, and described them as its



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

only serious, conscientious and honest colleagues, and as true, far-seeing patriots.

The printing of the French *communiqués* provides an example of Boche hypocrisy. Under the pretext of wanting to take them from the French papers, the *Gazette* copied them from the *Echo de Paris*, thus making them six and sometimes eight days late. The very important wireless station on the Berteaucourt plateau, however, received them twice daily. This was one way of inoculating the reader's mind with the demoralizing lies and poison of the Boche *communiqués*, since it was not possible to compare them with the French reports at the time. Eight days later such comparison was almost out of the question.

After the military section came the news cuttings from England and France ; then a chronicle of the war, into which every piece of tendencious information that was detrimental to the Allies was inserted ; then the list of the prisoners of war and diverse news items.

Before it was devoted to advertisements, the fourth page was crammed with "the Paris Bourse" and "Financial News ;" "Local News ;" "Anecdotes" (stories from Paris) ; "The Nonsense Pigeon-hole" (quotations from Parisian newspapers) ; "The War Calendar," "As the French See It," and "Latest News." The feuilletons were inserted at the bottom of pages one and three. According to M. Eugène Thibault, Prévost, who had a certain amount of culture, chose them from the *Revue des Deux Mondes* with a sort of superficial eclecticism which concealed quite a cunning method of procedure.

Among these feuilletons were *la Guerre qui vient*, by F. Delaisi ; *une Histoire de Parisien*, by Alfred Capus ; *les Prisonniers*, by Maupassant ; *Marion Jean*, by Colette Yver ; Edgar Poe's *le Crime de la Rue Morgue* ; *la Guerre Fatale*, by Colonel Driant (whose photograph appeared in the *Gazette*, as well as one of the cross erected on the spot where the heroic Deputy for Nancy was buried) ; *la Victoire*, by the late Paul Acker ; *le Sous-marin le "Vengeur,"* by Pierre Mäel ; *le Tambour de Rouquevair*, by Paul Arène ; Prosper Mérimée's *Colomba*, and others.

It is not surprising to find that this odious Franco-Boche

## The Poison Laboratory

organ neglected to make the usual arrangements with the Société des Gens de Lettres while it was thus pilfering our best authors.

Boche journalists also tried their hand at French literature, and the *Gazette* published *Un Roman à Lille*, by a certain Paul Oscar Hœcker, in which a seductive Teuton officer is naturally the hero of the romance, and a pleasing Lille woman his ready victim.

One heading: "War Victims among the Civilian Population of the Occupied Territories," was intended to excite the hatred of the people against the Allies and their airmen, who were bombarding important military points; but it did not succeed in doing so. The inhabitants were well aware that the necessities of war forced our aviators to this grievous but necessary work, and that the majority of the victims were hit by projectiles from the German barrage.

At first, the *Gazette des Ardennes* paid no attention to publicity, but in 1917 it tried to set up an advertising bureau, which never had any French clients. This contrivance was, however, required in order to fill the fourth page, which was short of subject matter. The box of lies was not inexhaustible. The strike on the part of the advertisers did not embarrass the Paprzicki-Gassmann management, however; it simply turned to the Boche advertising agency, Rudolf Morse, at Frankfort. The advertising service began on Oct. 6th, 1917, and from that moment onwards industrial firms and motor manufacturers appeared cheek by jowl with the Munich breweries and tooth-paste dealers on the fourth page of the paper. There were displayed in big letters the names of the most eminent thieves who had looted the factories of the invaded areas, and seized the stolen goods, in order to sell them back to the real owners the day after Peace was signed. Mannesmann Brothers, of Morocco and Düsseldorf, and Roechling Brothers, of Ludwigshafen, on the Rhine, were among the *Gazette's* best clients. Now, one of the Roechlings was arrested in Rhenish Prussia by the French authorities, and is awaiting the penalty of his misdeeds in the military prison at Amiens.

A newspaper, however inexact its information might be,

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

was not enough for G.H.Q.'s propaganda service. The latter desired to convince the reader by pictures as well. The German illustrated and comic papers had no circulation among the French public. An album, *l'Album de la Grande Guerre*, had been published in French, but it had had only middling success. In every point, however, it had fully corresponded to the intentions of G.H.Q. Boche soldiers and their allies were always rushing forward to the attack, or pursuing the retreating enemy, and the Entente's soldiers were always shown as prisoners of war. The French and the British were accused of the direst infamies. Photographs were given to prove that the French used dum-dum bullets. Sections of bullets showed the incision in the nickel casing, but the ignorant photographer had forgotten to efface from his negative a label which was stuck on one box and bore the device: *Show cartridges*.

Views of ruins were given. Some were caused by French or English artillery, and in these the churches were a mere heap of stones. In the others, the churches, respected by the Germans, were always intact. Thus the inhabitants were able to compare the condition of the Catholic church of Vimy with that of Rethel. But the *Album de la Grande Guerre* took care to forget to state that Vimy had been the scene of bloody fighting, whilst the town of Rethel, undefended and void of troops as it was, had been burnt in dastardly fashion by the Barbarians on Sept. 1st, 1914.

This publication reproduced quite faithfully the intentions of the Kaiser's General Staff, but the price was too high, 60 or 75 pfennig, and was beyond the reach of most purses. The *Gazette* made a modest effort by publishing a few illustrated supplements on the occasion of Christmas, 1914, New Year, 1915, March and Easter, 1915. They were called "special editions of the *Gazette des Ardennes*" and sought to arouse the public's pity for the Jewish victims of Russian barbarism by photographs of pogroms and to reassure it by views of prisoners' camps where our poor soldiers were, according to the Boches, better off than at home.

This effort became the *Gazette des Ardennes* (*édition illustrée*) on Aug. 2nd, 1915.



## The Poison Laboratory

Teschemacher, who was an editor of religious publications, was considered to know something about *éditions de luxe*. So he was put in charge of the illustrated section. At first it was a monthly, then a bi-monthly until September, 1917, and finally became a tri-monthly up to the death of the *Gazette illustrée* on Oct. 11th, 1918. It was published by Rudolf Mowe at Frankfort-on-Main, and contained eight pages.

In March, 1917, the management claimed that the circulation of the illustrated section was 100,000. It was sold at 15 centimes to begin with, 20 centimes in October, 1917, and 20 pfennig (25 centimes) from July, 1918, onwards. We have not been able to check the figures for the circulation, because the *Gazette illustrée* was printed in Germany. There is reason to doubt them, however, if we take the following letter into account :

" Generalstab des Feldheeres.

" Abt. III. b6 West.

" *Gazette des Ardennes*.

" Etappen-Kdtr. Bazeilles.—3 Inspektion.

(Translation)

" Section III. b6 is informed that the number of illustrated editions in your Kommandantur is less than that of the ordinary editions of the *Gazette des Ardennes*.

" The conciliatory tone and the wealth of illustrations have made access to the French population particularly easy, so that wherever the sale is properly regulated it is possible to sell as many *éditions illustrées* as ordinary editions of the *Gazette*.

" The Section, therefore, begs you, through this communication, to take in hand the distribution of the *illustrées*, and to this end it places a gratuitous number at your disposal. You are invited to inform us how many free copies will be wanted.

" The *édition illustrée* will now appear regularly twice a month, on the 1st and the 16th. The cost price is 12 centimes and the retail 15 centimes.

" A.B.

" SCHNITZER,

" Rittmeister."



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

An examination of a few numbers will give an idea of the value of this illustrated propaganda.

Number 7, Nov. 1915, is devoted to the residence of the Germans in France. A piece of verse indicates the part played by the brotherly *Feldgrauen* in looking after the wife of the mobilized Frenchman and tilling his field, but it ends with this threat :

Français, pourtant si tu m'assailles,  
Mort à toi, ennemi ! héros !  
Mais le soir, après la bataille,  
J'irai prier sur ton tombeau.

(Frenchman, if you assail me, then death to you, enemy ! hero ! But in the evening, after the battle, I shall go and pray at your graveside.)

An allegorical drawing reveals a German soldier sitting at the door of a cottage nursing a child on his knee, whilst his comrades are sowing and tilling the fields.

Above this there is a photograph of Dr. Wezel, the Kaiser's physician and tenant of the house with the big number 16, sitting in the midst of a group of orphans, and it bears the superscription : "A German army surgeon, who is managing a French civilian hospital, in the midst of his little protégés."

The second page contained a picture of the unveiling ceremony of the monument erected in the German cemetery at Vouziers and a photograph of the grotesque and trivial monument at Charleville cemetery.

The third page has an article containing the impressions of a prisoner, who of course likes the Boches ; and also pictures of "Joffre addressing French soldiers wearing their new helmets," and "a heavy French gun in action screened from airmen." Further, there are some views of French and English trenches, a meeting between President Poincaré and King Albert at the Belgian G.H.Q., and portraits of Generals Manchand, Dubail and Sarraill.

The fourth and fifth pages contain "life in the prisoners of war camps," where officers and soldiers are as happy as kings. The sixth page is devoted to Germany and has views

## The Poison Laboratory

of Willebadsburg, Marienberg, Münden in Hanover and the castle of Wilhelmshöhe, where Napoleon III. was interned. In the middle of the page, the Burg of the Hohenzollerns rears its savage silhouette.

The last page deals with the British. A few pages of the *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, a poem on Joan of Arc scourging perfidious England, and a caricature by Jean Weber on the Boer prisoner camps, remind one that our prisoners have also experienced the sufferings of the barbed wire cages and that their tormentors are past masters of barbarity. At the end there is a photograph of the Avenue de la Gare at Charleville, showing two newsboys shouting: "Read the *Gazette*! *The Gazette des Ardennes*!"

Number 20, Oct. 1st, 1916, is devoted to the "eviction of the population of Lille into the country, with nine photographs showing evicted persons at work on the land."

"Owing to the shortage of food caused by England's hunger-blockade, there is only an insufficient quantity of food coming from Germany for the inhabitants of the occupied parts of France. Consequently, if the High Command wants to ensure the feeding of the population of Northern France for any emergency that may arise, it must take energetic measures. It has been realized that the most efficacious measure was to evict a section of the population of the towns. As an appeal for volunteers met with no response, nothing remained but to enrol by force those sections of the population suited for the work."

The French Government has no right to protest, for "the measures taken by the military authority in occupied territory appear to be perfectly *justified, with regard to the rights of civilians*, by Article 43 of the Hague Convention, concerning the laws and customs of war on land."

The nine photographs are of some selected smiling young persons, rake in hand, who do not seem at all ill-pleased with their fate, and the *Gazette* describes these photographs of these *willing* women as "overwhelming proofs."

Schnitzer had conceived an ingenious plan to secure these overwhelming proofs. It should be judged by the following copy of a note sent to the Bazeilles Kommandantur:

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

" Generalstab des Feldheeres.

" G.H.Q.

" Abt. III. 6b West.

" Aug. 15th, 1916.

" *Gazette des Ardennes.*

" An die Mob. Etappen-Kdtr. 2. XII,  
Bazeilles.

" (Zum Schreiben B.B. 6952 v. 11-8-16.)

" The list received from Bazeilles is adjourned to this communication with a request for verification when the persons named have arrived at the places indicated: the names will be published in the *Gazette* forthwith:

" Owing to the excitement aroused among the French by the Lille deportations, it seems advisable that the deported persons should *themselves address* their request for publication to the management of the *G. d. A.* through the agency of the Kommandantur, and that they should state at the same time how they are, as regards their deportation, work and *moral, so that this may be a contradictory reply to the incitements of the French papers.*

" There ought to be some persons among those deported who will be ready to undertake this. If so, you are requested to demand this statement from each person, although in any case it should be borne in mind that the end in view should not be known by them.

" A.B. (by order) :

(Signed) " SCHNITZER,

" Rittmeister."

The third page reproduces the reception of Hindenburg and Ludendorff by the Crown Prince at Charleville station in September, 1916, when they were visiting the Western Front. Then, just as in almost every other number, pictures of convoys of prisoners, monuments and tombs, views of villages destroyed by Allied fire, and in this issue views of the old Seraglio at Constantinople. A Dutch cartoon completes the list of illustrations. A Dutch girl is showing an English sailor his reflection in a mirror, and saying: "Protector of little nations, I appeal to you against this man!"

In several numbers, Teschemacher has burgled libraries and stolen poems from the works of Ardenne poets; he has



## The Poison Laboratory

published these in the most shameless fashion, accompanied by drawings by H. Ernst.

Number 82, Oct. 11th, 1918, is the last of the series. The rout is already setting in among the Kaiser's armies, and trunks have to be packed for the flight to Frankfort. It is pitched in a much lower key than the others.

The first page has a charcoal drawing of an Ardenne landscape. The second has pictures of the tombs of British airmen, surrounded by Belgian soldiers in their helmets with movable visors. The third has photographs of repatriation trains. The fourth depicts German anti-aircraft defences, the humane treatment meted out to prisoners, and the presentation to Foch of his marshal's baton; then lower down, the visit of the Hetman of the Ukraine to G.H.Q., and finally some harmless cartoons copied from Parisian humorists.

No more scenes of war, no more German victories. It is the end!

To round off its work, the *Gazette* published the *Almanach de la Gazette des Ardennes* at the end of every year. The aim of this was dictated by the same old refrain. The Germans are not barbarians. They did not want the war. The English are the real enemies of France, ever since the capture of Calais. Therefore it is necessary to combine to drive them off. Just as in the paper itself, the *Feldgrauen* are made out to be good fathers to French children, and the prisoners of war are the objects of all possible homely attentions on the part of their gaolers.

The French and Belgian prisoners of war had the *Gazette des Ardennes* to give them all the depression that was necessary. It was not the same with the English, Americans and Russians, who did not know any French.

The *Generalstab* wanted to bring the same influence to bear on their moral, and Schnitzer published *The War Chronicle*, "an illustrated paper for the British." The publishers of the *Edition Illustrée* at Frankfort issued *America in Europe*, which was intended for the Yankees, and the firm of Gaspari, of Berlin (undoubtedly a relation of Gaspari of Charleville) printed a Russian paper for the Muscovites. Finally the *Baltische illustrierte Zeitung* was substituted for the *Gazette*



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

*Illustrée* in Poland and the Baltic Provinces. It proceeded from the same press as the French edition.

These various systems of distribution constituted the base of operations for the defeatist campaign waged by G.H.Q. in occupied territory and neutral countries. It collapsed as lamentably as Ludendorff's, for the reptile sheet published by Schnitzer and Prévost was always considered a tissue of falsehoods and was always treated by its French vendors as well as its buyers as a *Gazette des menteurs*.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE GAZETTE'S CAMPAIGNS

An instrument of demoralization.—Victories underlined for public notice.—Luck turns: defensive victories and rearguard successes.—The *Gazette's* friends.—Prévost's pet paper.—A confidential letter which reaches the wrong address.—M. Delcassé to M. Joseph Caillaux.—A great Frenchman.—Memories of Agadir.—France through the *Gazette's* spectacles.—Paris to blame.—England the cause of the war.—Appeal to the *Poilus de France*.—A reply to General Pétain.—Peaceful Germany.—Revelations of Belgian diplomats.—A danger to Europe and Belgium.—Russia accuses.—Caught in the act of lying.—The wolf and the lamb.—Prévost sums up.—A piteous peroration.—Foch's reply.—Why William violated Belgium's neutrality.—England's object.—Beware of British egoism.—They will keep Calais.—The pirates' threat.—The occupied regions will die of hunger first.—The civilizing and moralizing force of the submarine campaign.—The rights of the violated small nations.—The *Gazette* and Alsace-Lorraine.—Statements by two renegades.—A very compromised constituency.—A forced confession: Alsace-Lorraine has remained French.—The French have bombarded Rheims.—French atrocities.—Miss Cavell and Mata Hari.—Prévost as economist.—The excommunicated socialist patriots.—The kick of the ass.

THE first duty of the abominable *Gazette* was to try to demoralize the masses by representing events in a light which was constantly favourable to Germany even when the military situation compelled her army to take up rear positions. It was assisted in this task by G.H.Q., who had the official German *communiqué* translated into French and placarded up by the printing-house in the Avenue de la Gare. It underlined in red all advances and captures of places or territory, and in blue all captures of prisoners, guns or other material. On the other hand, when the news was not so reassuring the *communiqués* were posted up reluctantly and

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

tardily ; but the hypocrisy and the lying of the Boches were stronger than their common sense, for at the very moment of Ludendorff's greatest defeat, the *communiqué* stated, to the great amusement of the people of the occupied territories, that the invincible army was continuing to win victories during its retirement, but that they were defensive victories, rearguard successes, and that the Kaiser's troops were methodically withdrawing to prepared positions without the enemy being aware of this fact. The *Feldgrauen* themselves shrugged their shoulders and towards the end launched out into bitter reproaches against their chiefs and William. The almost divine respect for the Kaiser began to disappear ; discipline was dying.

The patriotic French papers were the object of an almost savage hatred on the part of this renegade ; only the defeatist press found favour with it and earned its sympathy. Extracts from the *Bonnet Rouge*, the *Pays*, la *Bataille*, the *Journal du Peuple*, la *Vérité* and others had the honours of the first page, side by side with Prévost's filth, and were treated as the only serious newspapers. The papers which were most quoted among the foreign press were the *Manchester Guardian*, and *La Feuille*, l'*Indépendance Helvétique*, la *Nation*, la *Guerre-mondiale* of Geneva ; the Germanophile papers of Basle, Berne and Zürich ; the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Kurier* of Rotterdam, *Politiken* of Copenhagen, and a number of Swedish papers. *Le Bonnet Rouge* was the French newspaper preferred by Prévost and he quoted innumerable articles from the defeatist organ. He gave particular attention to the censored articles and reproduced them without any excisions, so that the French people in the occupied territory ended by nicknaming the *Bonnet Rouge* the *Gazette des Ardennes de Paris*, and the Boche G.H.Q. newspaper le *Bonnet Rouge de Charleville*.

A wrongly-addressed envelope enables us to confirm the relations existing between the two traitorous newspapers. An envelope bearing the Paris postmark, 4 o'clock, June 11th, 1916, was delivered to us instead of to the "Gazette." It contained "the text of articles by the editor, M. Miguel Almereyda, which had been suppressed by the French censorship in the issues

## The Gazette's Campaigns

of the ' *Bonnet Rouge* ' of June 7th and 9th, 1916, and show what is prohibited by M. Briand's censorship." Copies of the articles were attached to the note and contained :

1. *Après le bâillon*, of Miguel Almereyda, against the censorship ;
2. *Remplaçons*, dealing with manœuvres against the Briand ministry ;
3. *Pour la paix*, a Swiss appeal for peace, signed E. Guggi and A. Sauter.

The *Gazette* was demoralizing in the highest degree, for it only quoted the scandalous sessions in which the Kienthalist deputies were the object of their colleagues' scorn and in which other deputies launched attacks on the Government. According to Prévost, Messrs. Alexandre Blanc, Raffin-Dugeus, Brizon, Cachin, Mayéras and Jean Longuet were the only spokesmen of French thought. The Almereyda, Bolo, Duval, Turmel, Lenoir, Malvy and Caillaux affairs were the subject of bitter campaigns by the Franco-Boche rag, but the way in which these were conducted decided public opinion and increased the confidence of the occupied areas in M. Clemenceau. Only sympathetic articles and depositions which were favourable to the accused were reproduced. In Number 75 of the *Gazette*, August 19, 1915, the paper was already putting the responsibility for the war on M. Delcassé and acknowledging M. Joseph Caillaux to be a great man.

" . . . M. Delcassé resigns. But his system has not resigned, for radicalism has not been able to produce a great leader who could unite home and foreign policy.

" A few years later an attempt was outlined. This came from M. Caillaux, who had to open the conversation after Agadir, when the silence was broken in rather disagreeable fashion. He was a radical, not in the Delcassé manner, but thoroughly radical, one of the young men of the party. Was it going to be possible to come to an understanding on the Morocco question, perhaps even beyond it ?

" It was only a beginning, a first word, an almost timid essay. Was the Entente with Germany supplementing other Ententes going to be effected ? But then another radical, one of the old men of the party, overthrows M. Caillaux.



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

Did M. Clemenceau, who saw 1870, betray over and beyond his party the secret idea of the country on this day? Was not an entente with Germany wanted at the bottom of their hearts?

"What that overthrower of ministries, M. Clemenceau, too passionate as he is to be a far-seeing politician, did that day was only to add a new trophy to his collection. His action was wholly to the advantage of the anti-German diplomacy, which was forging ahead from one thing to another, bringing militarism, nationalism and ultimately—the war."

The secondary objects of G.H.Q. were to depress the population of the invaded territories by revealing a France that was not confident of the issue of the war, a people crying out for peace, a disunited parliament and a blind government which had driven the army into inevitable defeat and the country to the final catastrophe in order to save the politicians in power. The world was assured by the former Paris correspondent of the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* that it was Paris who had wanted the war.

"It has been said that Napoleon was France's cavalier, but that his love for her was cruel and pitiless and that he spurred her into the abyss. The same can be said of Paris. *It is always Paris that drags the provinces further than they want to go. . . . And it is Paris that, reckless to the point of folly and drunk with glory, allowed diplomacy to bring matters to war.* The provinces wanted peace! Thus they were amazed when war broke out. Simple in mind and nature, they could not follow the entanglement of diplomacy. But it was too late to react. As they considered themselves innocent, they had but one idea: 'Since I am not to blame, it must be Germany.' Wrong, poor provincial France!

"To-day, it is the provinces that are invaded by the war. Paris, on the contrary, is spared, and replies to the plaintive cries with: 'Not yet! Come on! Let us go on! . . . Peace will come at the end.' The provinces will labour long and patiently to rebuild a France. But one day perhaps they will understand the capital's responsibility, and say under their breath: 'How she has made us suffer!'"

(*La Diplomatie fatale*, No. 75, Aug. 19, 1915.)

## The Gazette's Campaigns

Its other object, and its chief one, is to justify Germany before the civilized world by trying to put upon the Entente the responsibility for the war and to prove that France was driven to the war by England.

The responsibility for the war! The *Gazette* devotes a multitude of articles to this grave question which is so critical for the Government that it sets out to defend. It feels that its cause is a bad one, and that the most that could be done was to confound public opinion so that the latter would be deceived by its sophistries and unable to distinguish the truth. It is impossible for us to reproduce all the arguments brought forward by the Alsatian traitor; a library would not be sufficient for this purpose. We shall, therefore, restrict ourselves to publishing some extracts from a special number (*Edition Spéciale*, No. 2), which was dropped by aeroplanes over the French lines in the spring of 1917. It bears a large-letter title: "Aux poilus de France," and it sums up all Prévost's articles.

Schnitzer's subordinate drew up this long statement as a reply to a little catechism written by General Pétain, for the use of the "Poilus de France," which "claims to answer in a paternal way the main questions that most trouble the soldier's conscience."

"In substance," General Pétain says, "it was Germany who wanted war; she alone prepared for it in Europe. It is she who is continuing it in order to realize her exorbitant claims to world dominion; she is the obstacle to peace."

Thus General Pétain. Let us see what history has to say in reply:

"If Germany wanted war she would not have waited for the moment when her 'aggression' would necessarily bring down upon her the three great powers of Europe. *One cannot understand why she did not profit by one of the numerous favourable occasions which presented themselves for her to crush one after the other her adversaries which are now leagued together.*"

Yes, but the renegade forgets to add that Germany did not profit by one of these numerous favourable occasions because the reorganization of her army was not yet completed, because her field artillery, with its 77-m. gun, and her heavy artillery

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

had not yet been reformed so as to reply to our dangerous 75, and because the credits of the new army law which was to ensure the numerical superiority of the German Army over the French had not yet been voted by the Reichstag.

The *Generalstab's* writer continues: "Here we have evidently a delicate matter. If the *poilu* was inquisitive, he would ask his General for permission to read at his leisure certain diplomatic documents of the highest interest, the authors of which could not be open to suspicion since they are now the friends and allies of France. But the Paris Government and its censorship have taken care that the French people should be ignorant of the existence of these diplomatic documents which have been drawn up during the course of the last ten years by the Belgian plenipotentiaries at Paris, London and Berlin. The perusal of these testimonies from impartial and informed spectators of the anti-German policy of the Triple Entente would, indeed, greatly complicate the 'moralizing' task of General Pétain.

"For these Belgian statesmen would show suffering France that it was not Germany but her own politicians who concocted, *behind her back*, this personal and irresponsible policy which was hatched in the mysterious retreats of secret and irresponsible diplomacy, and which rendered the conflict inevitable.

"Germany was pacifically inclined. She only asked to be allowed to live and develop her strong and legitimate vitality."

But if, according to the *Gazette*, Germany was pacifically inclined, this was not the case with the Triple Entente.

"In the face of this peaceful rôle played by Germany and her allies, let us examine the more and more disquieting and provoking attitude of the Triple Entente, the issue of the Franco-Russian alliance, which already contained the germs of all the fatal development of the chauvinistic and revengeful tendencies on the one hand and the Pan-Slav aspirations on the other.

"In its fateful, definitive form this Entente was the work of English intrigue, which succeeded skilfully in exploiting against Germany the old rancour of France and the more recent antagonism of Muscovite imperialism.



## The Gazette's Campaigns

"Again, it is the Belgian ministers at Paris, London and Berlin who give us a particularly impartial and exact review of this policy which was becoming more and more provoking, and more and more threatening to peace. . . .

"Baron Greinde writes in his report of Dec. 6th, 1911: '*It is the Entente Cordiale that has reawakened in France the idea of revenge which was hitherto stilled. From it, too, proceeds the anxiety and uneasiness with which Europe has been struggling for the last seven years.*' "

Belgium is not the only one to make accusation. Russia joins with her. On Feb. 15th, 1915, the naturalized Bavarian declares that "on the evening of July 31st, the French Government did not yet know that Russia had ordered the general mobilization in the night of July 30-31. The French ambassador therefore—incredible though it may seem!—had not informed his Government, so that Germany's counter mobilization was known sooner in Paris and could thus be presented to the French public as a German threat. From all evidence it seems that we have here unreported complicity which will be established by history."

This is a gross lie, told to deceive the neutrals and to disconcert, for the moment, the French of the invaded regions, since the Parisians read on July 30th in the Press that Nicholas II.'s ukase called to the colours the reservists of 23 whole governments and 71 districts of 14 other governments.

After reviewing the opinion of the French and Russian Presses at the outbreak of war and during the hostilities, this pen-driver de Moosch appends the following comments:

"Thus the French Government precipitated its people into this terrible war for the Panslavism of Suchomlinov and his colleagues.

"The French Government will never be able to give the lie to all these witnesses! But it is endeavouring to hide the terrible truth from the people. The day it comes to light, in spite of all these efforts, will only bring a more terrible awakening!"

The fable of the wolf and the lamb is always seasonable for Pan-Germanism!



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

All this time, according to the edition for the "Poilus," Germany remained on the defensive.

"It is well known that before the war, Germany, so-called militarist, maintained an active army which was *proportionately* far less strong than that of France, and that her military expenditure was lower than France's. But the 'militarist' French Governments refused to admit the logical consequences of the growth of the German population, and decided to impose the three years' military service upon the country."

After these overwhelming charges, entitled *les Origines de la Guerre*, Prévost, as counsel for G.H.Q., sums up as follows:

(a) The policy of encirclement which was pursued against Germany would excuse her before history, even if she had let loose the war. When a nation finds itself surrounded thus by enemies who assume a more and more threatening aspect towards the free development of her forces and faculties, could it be really surprising if this nation attempted by one sudden effort to set itself free? Could it be said that this nation was alone the "aggressor," and the others its innocent victims?

(b) "Urged on by her nationalists, France has always rejected the hand of friendship that the German people and its Emperor stretched out to her for forty-three years." France preferred to remain faithful to her pledges. If she had reflected, like Bethmann-Hollweg, that solemn treaties are only scraps of paper, she would not have gone to war with Germany, and would have been free to let the latter crush Russia and then turn on us.

(c) The Austro-Serbian conflict was only a pretext. Serbia is a victim of Pan Slavist intrigues.

(d) Belgium's neutrality was violated only because the Entente was prepared to violate it.

(e) Finally England's hypocrisy, for whom Belgium's neutrality was only the motive with which she covered *her* war against Germany, is the chief author of the drama.

(f) Germany wants peace. The Entente opposes it. Peaceful Germany "has declared, in agreement with her allies, that she did not aspire to crush anybody, and that her

## The Gazette's Campaigns

propositions would be such as would form the basis of a durable peace and entente between the nations."

(Of course, she takes good care not to disclose them.)

In conclusion, the Boche defender cries in a piteous peroration: "What is left (the day after the refusal to listen to the deceitful proposals of Boche diplomacy) but the fear of the rulers of the Entente, who tremble at the thought that if the day of peace does not bring them the absolution of impossible victory it will begin the trial of their terrible responsibilities before the tribunal of their peoples?"

We shall not trouble to refute such poor arguments. Foch took it upon himself, together with the "Poilus de France," to make a more eloquent reply in the name of our country.

William can amuse himself in the depths of his Dutch retreat by looking over the whole series of the infamous *Gazette* and meditating upon its results.

In order to condone the violation of Belgian neutrality the wicked Alsatian had to bring all the cunning of his Franco-Boche wit into play.

Another special edition of Dec. 12th, 1914, explains that the violation of Belgium was necessitated by the discovery of the military Convention drawn up by the Belgian Chief of Staff and the British military attaché at Brussels, according to which England promised to send an army of 160,000 men in the event of Germany passing through Belgian territory to attack France.

No. 9, Dec. 27th, 1914, deals with the fateful rôle played by Belgium in this war. It states: "We know: (1) That Belgium had secret military agreements with England; (2) That the French General Staff (authorized of course by the Belgian Government) surveyed all places and the organization of all fortified places in time of peace; that the instructions for the defence of Namur, Liège, etc., were elaborated by both Governments in common. All these measures were directed against Germany.

"Since she was aware of all these machinations, therefore, it was Germany's absolute duty, unless she wanted to perish voluntarily, to forestall France. *All the outcry about the violation of Belgian 'neutrality' is, therefore, out of place.*

"After these preliminaries, let us first examine the events

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

which happened at the beginning of hostilities with France. The Germans *did not want* to attack Belgium; they asked the Belgian Government for permission for their army to cross the country and formally promised to pay for all damage and loss of any kind. *These demands and promises were, moreover,* renewed after the fall of Liège.

"Belgium, *pledged as she was by the known conventions,* bluntly refused and declared that a state of war would exist the moment a foot was set across her frontier.

"It goes without saying that Belgium *would never have committed this act of imprudence,* if she had not been in possession of definite guarantees from England. This country then seized this fine opportunity to declare war on Germany, a war that had been premeditated and prepared for a long time past.

". . . The march of events corresponded perfectly with England's expectations, for she was delighted to have an ideal opportunity of fishing in troubled waters. . . ."

It can be seen that it is not at all difficult for Prévost to get round difficulties. Every time his Germanic employer commits a new crime, he has a ready reply with which to justify it: "England is to blame."

Ah! Poor England! She was often dragged into it all. For Prévost hoped thus to rouse the hatred of the people of the invaded areas for our loyal allies. He never succeeded. Each thrust crumpled up against the robust common sense of the French of the north and north-east.

"England's object is as clear as day" (No. 146, Feb. 16th, 1916). "The liberation of Belgium? Oh, no! There is not one English newspaper which would dare to write that seriously now. The object of England, the primary and decisive cause of this terrible war, is to destroy the industrial strength and the commercial prosperity of Germany. If there is one fact beyond the shadow of a doubt, it is this English ambition, which was foreseen and foretold before the war by a great number of French economists and politicians, confirmed in all the official reports of the Belgian ministers in London and Berlin, and finally admitted during the war by English speakers and journalists.



## The Gazette's Campaigns

"England promises her allies that when peace comes she will safeguard their interests to the detriment of Germany. Do her allies ask *how she will behave towards them?* Do they really believe that the egoistic Englishman, who will himself be hard hit by the war, will dream for one instant of sacrificing for them what he is able to save of his own prosperity?"

"And do not let us forget that England's allies will always have before them Germany's armies and those of her allies. It is with them that the reckoning will have to be settled."

This reckoning is all settled, and it is the *Almanach de la Gazette des Ardennes* for the year 1917 that informs us of it. They will keep the French coasts.

"Calais was occupied by the English at the beginning of the present war. They have gradually reinforced the fortifications on the land side and transformed the forts, to which natives are forbidden access. Besides, Lord Balfour's words to Churchill are familiar: 'As long as we hold Calais, we can console ourselves for the loss of Antwerp.' As a matter of fact, it is said that Calais has passed almost completely under English control.

"The French Government put a question to the British to ask whether Calais and the French territory occupied by British troops would be definitely evacuated after peace was concluded. The answer, far from being in the affirmative, has been vague and far from satisfactory."

Did not the Kaiser say shortly after his arrival in Charleville that the French would be glad of Germany's help after the war to drive the English out of Dunkirk, Calais, Boulogne and Havre?

Sometimes the jeremiads turn to threats. Mr. Churchill, the English Navy Minister, was interviewed by a correspondent of the *Matin* and declared that "the blockade of Germany would not be slackened until Germany had been brought to discretion; and *even if France and Russia abandoned the war*, England would continue it to the end."

"England treats us like a besieged fortress" (No. 22, Feb. 15, 1915). "Well, we must fight with all available means against her knavish tricks, and England will also be a besieged fortress to us.



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

"England must be harmed by every possible means. Her food-supply by ocean and land must be annihilated.

"As for Germany, it is her duty to defend herself to the last extremity. No German wants to strangle himself to please the British! Besides, Messrs. Churchill and Co. have not seriously reflected upon the simple results of these tactics. Let this be borne in mind: there are about 600,000 prisoners of war in Germany, apart from civilians. . . . Besides, the territories occupied by the Germans number nearly fourteen million inhabitants. And if famine should make itself felt one day, it is clear that *enemy subjects would be the first to suffer*, for no German will die of hunger *whilst these former have anything to eat*.

"But it is true that there are no English in the occupied territories who run this risk! We had almost forgotten that."

Tirpitz was already preparing his satanic plan of the submarine campaign.

Germany sincerely believed that she would thus force England to her knees.

The infamous *Gazette* utters a cry of triumph and joy. The pirates may murder at their leisure, for the traitor makes out, in No. 355, Feb. 27, 1917, that *the submarine war is not immoral*.

"... *England means to impose upon Europe the continuation of the carnage, an indefinite prolongation of the miseries of war, which her egoism had hitherto spared us*. On the other hand, it is the obligation of the German submarines to *cut short* this war by striking British mercantile interests in a vital spot. They do not mean to *annihilate* whatever may be in question. On the day when they will have put upon England Mr. Churchill's famous *muzzle*, their task will be accomplished for the greater prosperity of the old European continent.

"Compare these two objects—the German and the English. Which of the two is immoral?"

It is not Germany that has violated Belgium's neutrality. It is England that is treading under foot the rights of small nations. She violates Greek neutrality by preventing King Constantine from becoming one of William's agents and from transforming his kingdom into a vast Boche barracks. She violates Holland's and Sweden's neutrality by preventing these

## The Gazette's Campaigns

two countries from carrying on a contraband of American food for Germany's benefit.

The horrible paper also sheds hypocritical tears over those peoples enslaved by Russia, and unfortunate Ireland, but it has no pity for the Armenian martyrs, or for Alsace-Lorraine, who has groaned for forty-five years under the persecutions of her torturers.

On the contrary, according to the renegade who is at home in such matters, since he comes of old Alsatian stock, Alsace and Lorraine have never been so happy as under Boche domination, and only ask to be allowed to remain German. He calls to his rescue two renegades like himself, Dr. Hoeffel, president of the Alsace-Lorraine Senate, and Dr. Ricklin, president of the Strassburg Diet, both of whom have made speeches which were printed in the *Voix d'Alsace-Lorraine* (No. 419, June 23, 1917).

Dr. Hoeffel cries: "We were incorporated in the German Empire by a perfectly regular treaty. This peace-treaty is an act of international law, which has created a definitive law and has bound Alsace-Lorraine to the German Empire permanently.

"Under the ægis of this empire, we have enjoyed in the fullest measure the benefits of peace for forty-three years. . . . Fate restored us to Germany in 1871. We are closely united to her economically as well as by blood and language. And we are penetrated by the conviction that Alsace-Lorraine can only hope for a prosperous and peaceful future through her union with the German Empire, to which we are loyally attached."

Do not forget that the Alsatian Senate did not proceed from any voting. It was appointed directly by the Kaiser.

Dr. Ricklin, Prévost's friend, said *Amen*. He, too, touches on the subject in his speech to the Second Chamber and makes the following declaration:

" . . . This is why I consider it a duty to my conscience to declare here that the people of Alsace-Lorraine repudiates with all its energy the idea that this terrible carnage should continue for their sake. This people desires nothing else than to develop and prosper from an intellectual, economic and

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

constitutional point of view in its *indissoluble union* with the German Empire, preserving meanwhile their lawful peculiarities.

"The valiant sons of our country at the front, our hope, are fighting and dying not merely for the safety and the future of the German Empire. They are fighting for the full equality of their little country among the federated states of Germany.

"Your applause, gentlemen, proves to me that I have just expressed your inmost convictions, and it is in this sense that we cry: 'Alsace-Lorraine, the German Empire, the German Emperor—long may they live!'"

"We shall not add anything to these eloquent speeches," the felon concludes. He could have added, however, that some time before the war Abbé Winterer's successor had gone over to the enemy and that his position in the Altkirch district was very compromised, for the inhabitants regarded him as a thorough Boche.

Nevertheless, the Teuton loyalism of the two presidents of the Strassburg parliament did not extend to the people, and an Alsatian confesses this fact in No. 653, June 14th, 1918 ("Pour l'Alsace-Lorraine").

We shall quote the end of the article:

"... It is very comprehensible that a certain amount of discontent should arise in this Alsace-Lorraine, which is only a step or two away from the theatre of war, and compulsorily subjected to the military control of the lines of communication areas. There have certainly been some mistakes. Then the Alsatian character has a well-known tendency to make opposition, and certain elements have given this full rein, forgetting the gravity of the hour, which could not admit of the innocent whims of times of peace. Thus rigorous measures were the result. But would it be right to base upon a *passing bad temper* a decision affecting the ultimate fate of the country? *Would a plébiscite taken at this critical moment reflect the real soul of the country?* No, it is not fitting to use or rather to abuse the fits and starts of a people's temper at such an agitated epoch. *This would mean giving free rein to chance.* But one does not gamble with a nation! And if a vote of the people of Alsace-Lorraine is seriously wanted, then a stipula-



## The Gazette's Campaigns

tion would have to be made for this vote to be taken every ten years.

"Yes, such is the foundation of our character, and if we voted every ten years, the world would get some surprises, and would see some changes of mind that would be rather comic."

This Alsatian is forecasting the reception of our poilus by our liberated brethren, and foretelling the words uttered by President Poincaré in response to the enthusiastic welcome of Metz, Strassburg, Colmar and Mulhouse: "There is the plébiscite!"

In the same way the *Gazette* treated other matters, in which Germany was always right and the Entente always wrong.

The articles on the destruction of Rheims Cathedral by the Barbarians, on the pretext that machine guns had been posted on the towers, and that the bombardment "was a reply to the bombardment by French artillery of a number of towns and places behind the German front . . ."; and those articles on the benevolent treatment of prisoners of war, when we could see the martyrdom of our unfortunate compatriots in the camps near us, all reinforced the conviction which everybody had formed that the infamous paper was lying.

The filthy rag even had the audacity to state that the wounded and prisoners taken by the French were martyred, and it published various articles on this subject which were just as fantastic as they were false.

"The French generals even" (writes the *Gazette*, Nov. 29th, 1917) "do not shrink from brutal treatment of prisoners in order to extort military information from them." An N.C.O., F——, declares on oath, March 15th, 1916, that he fell into the hands of the French, *grievously* wounded, but was made to follow the column on foot.

A general, whose name is not given on purpose, cross-questions him, and as he refuses to speak, he is insulted by the officer, who threatens to have him shot.

And the *Gazette* concludes:

"Here is a French general who is not ashamed to make use of such methods to drive a German soldier to violate his



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

oath of loyalty to the colours and to induce him to betray his country ! ”

On Jan. 5th, 1915, a German Staff major, also anonymous, and also in the service of the Red Cross, the better to stress French barbarity, was subjected to ill-treatment. If we can believe Gaspari, he drew up a report which ends as follows :

“ This treatment was not the result of bad organization, but of calculated brutality. By treating us like this, the French want to give the inhabitants of the localities we pass through the impression of ‘starved and demoralized Boches.’ ”

“ We cannot doubt,” adds the editor, “ the authenticity of the facts related in this Red Cross officer’s report (who was sent back to Germany in the exchange of prisoners), for almost every day the German military authorities receive reports of this kind concerning the ill-treatment meted out in France to German prisoners, even wounded men.”

After such accusations, it is very difficult to speak in France about the treatment inflicted on our prisoners.

The murder of Miss Cavell, however, caused him some embarrassment. He hastened with alacrity to seize upon the execution of Mata Hari, the Dutch dancer, who betrayed the nation that had offered her hospitality and wealth, and in No. 445, Aug. 14th, 1917, Prévost violently attacks M. Abel Hermant, who had demonstrated in the *Figaro* that the sentence passed by the Paris court-martial was profoundly just and necessary.

But the renegade replies to M. Abel Hermant by reproducing a certain passage from a Dutch periodical, *Toekomst*, July 21st, which makes out that the execution of Miss Cavell was not a murder : “ A person who abuses her nurse’s habit to deceive the confidence placed in her, and to enable several hundreds of soldiers to fight the Germans, in whose midst she lived in perfect safety and liberty, does not deserve to be exalted. . . . ”

And Prévost concludes his diatribe against the “ academic boulevardier ” [sic] with : “ But the most elementary honesty should have prevented you, M. Abel Hermant, and your Parisian comrades—ever ready to adapt their chameleonic

## The Gazette's Campaigns

convictions to circumstances—from trembling with this false and misplaced indignation.”

Financial and political questions did not leave the Bavaro-Alsatian journalist cold. Germany's economic condition is admirable; the Entente's is on the point of foundering in disaster and bankruptcy; the mark is rising, the franc is falling, the pound is depreciating, and soon the dollar will have no currency in neutral banks. Why strive for an impossible victory when Germany occupies the richest industrial provinces of France, and when, with inexhaustible generosity, she is quite prepared to sell back to the factories of the north, the Ardennes and the east all the materials that she has stolen from them?

The Socialists are the subject of the solicitude of the General Staff's militarists. Why not listen to the invitations of the German Socialists to hold a conference at Stockholm. Well done, the Kienthalist French deputies, the defeatist press, of the *Bonnet Rouge* variety, who testify to a practical and far-seeing patriotism!

But the truly French Socialists turned a deaf ear. Therefore, they are the enemies of their own country, since they want to continue the war. It is Prévost's duty to let them know that Ludendorff is not pleased with them, and to give them good advice.

“Make a beginning, French Socialists, by liberating France from this nationalist policy, and from this ‘bourgeois imperialism,’ which have made your bleeding people their instrument and their victim.

“How dare you write that ‘you vouch for what you will do’ to oblige the Allied Governments to keep to your principles at the conclusion of peace? You, whose spokesman, Gustav Hervé, editor of the prophetic *Guerre qui vient*, has gone over with lock, stock, barrel, drums and trumpets, into the camp of those people whose hateful machinations he used to denounce! You who allowed your great Jaurès to be assassinated in dastardly fashion, and permitted the guilty parties to remain unpunished!

“And after all your proofs of perfect impotence, you want the German people, even if it agrees not to doubt your good

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

faith, to consider you equal to opposing the plans of annihilation, which have been notoriously contrived against its existence and its future ? ” (No. 477, October 18th, 1917).

The matter at issue was the Socialist Congress at Bordeaux, which produced the split between the Majority and the Minority —“ the members of this minority ” which is ceaselessly growing, which does not intend blindly to submit any longer, and whose left wing is formed by the *hard and fast pacifists* representing the tendency of the Socialist congresses of Zimmerwald and Kienthal ; and these thoroughgoing pacifists are recommended to his readers by the General Staff’s agent : “ Messrs. Jean Longuet, Rappoport, Pressamane, Brizon, Raffin-Dugens, etc.”

As for the “ Governmental ” Socialists, such as Sembat, Renaudel and Albert Thomas, they were simply regarded as vulgar nationalists.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE GREAT OFFENSIVES

(Foch v. Ludendorff)

Plans for attack on Verdun.—The moderation of a German *communiqué*.—The favourite critiques of the traitor.—Awaiting the capitulation of Verdun.—The reward of defeat.—Foch is not dead.—France has no more men.—An unimportant success.—The recapture of Douaumont is of no importance.—Like Cæsar's.—Offensive against the Chemin des Dames.—The Crown Prince's birthday.—A catastrophic (?) success.—Germany raises her head again.—Nothing can resist the line of brass.—The deception of a single command.—Let us await the verdict of the future.—In praise of the Crown Prince.—Nothing can resist the German army.—Prévost admits the exaggeration of the *Journal du Peuple*.—The Compiègne offensive.—A first deception.—The last spring of the hunted beast.—American help the nightmare of the *Gazette*.—Mr. Wilson insulted.—War fever in the United States.—The true Americans are the cannibals.—The American army is not an army.—A liar to the last.—A voluntary retreat.—Foch is always beaten.—The last prophecy of Colonel Egli.—The tone changes: Pity that doesn't ring true.—The swan's song.—Nicholas II. v. M. Poincaré.—The claims of a captured metallurgist.—Belgian democrats and Russian patriots again.—The defeatists.—If France had desired peace.—M. Clemenceau speaks.—Peace, please, for poor Germany.

I N November, 1915, trains of vast length, crammed with troops and *matériel*, began to run ceaselessly night and day from all directions to the eastern Argonne and the Woevre plateau, from the north via Liart and Hirson, from Germany and Belgium via Givet, from Champagne via Mohon, from Lorraine via Longuyon. Falkenhayn was preparing the great Verdun offensive, the fall of which fortress was intended to refurbish the temporarily tarnished military prestige of the Crown Prince and open the road to Paris.



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

These preparations were carried on in the greatest secrecy, and the *Gazette* did not breathe a word of what was to happen.

The 24th of February, 1916, saw the opening of the attack and the first successes of the Crown Prince's army. The journal of the *Generalstab* showed moderation as to details. It confined itself to reproducing, without comment, the official *communiqués* with all their moderation, as, for example, the report of the capture of Fort Douaumont, which ran thus :

“ G.H.Q., February 16th, 1916.

“ The strong fort of Douaumont, which forms the north-east pillar of the principal line of permanent fortifications of Verdun, was taken by assault yesterday afternoon by the 24th Brandenburg Infantry. The fort is firmly held by the Germans.”

During the first period of the offensive the strategists of the *Gazette* abstained from all comment. They confined themselves to reproducing the articles in the French Press, especially when these reflected anxiety ; they carefully avoided publishing any expressions of hope. The critiques of General N—— in *Le Bonnet Rouge* were generally given first place.

Sometimes Swiss Germanophiles discussed the figures of the German losses, which they claimed were light, contrary to the opinion of their French colleagues.

The *Gazette* was holding itself in and keeping its hymn of victory for the capitulation of Verdun.

The German advance suffered a check, and, to console his son for his ill-luck, the genial Kaiser conferred on him the order *Pour le Mérite* as a reward for his successes before Verdun. It was then found necessary to restrain the joy of the inhabitants of the occupied area and reply to the French newspapers, which announced the failure of Falkenhayn's plan.

Foch, on his side, launched an offensive on the Somme in conjunction with the English army. France, then, is not yet dead. The Field Greys, exhausted by their effort on the Meuse, regard with horror fresh battles, followed by fresh

## The Great Offensives

hecatombs. So their *moral* must be stiffened, and our confidence in the English army which is supporting our illustrious chief must be destroyed.

It was necessary to intervene. Our country, according to the *Gazette*, could not endure the new superhuman effort required of our soldiers. *The confession that France has reached the extreme limit of possible sacrifice has come out of the secret domain of Government anxiety to affirm itself in the public eye.*

“Our readers know that we are not in the habit of prophesying. But it is stating a simple fact to say that the only appreciable progress realized by the first assault of the attacking army is not the work of the English.

“It must be noticed that with the methods employed by our allies, it is always possible to destroy and submerge the enemy’s first line of trenches.

“... Will the French, who believed that the hour had come for the big English push, the push which, according to the pro-Government Hervé himself, ‘the whole of France is following with trembling expectation,’ allow themselves to be deluded once more when they learn—if they ever do learn it!—that the English, who began by occupying three-quarters of the front of attack, have just shortened their line, abandoning a good ten kilometres to the French troops?” (No. 223, July 10th, 1916).

In October, 1916, it is the French who are attacking at Verdun. They have swept over the German lines; Fort Douaumont is retaken, and our *poilus* are advancing victoriously on their old positions of February. That is of no importance compared with events in Rumania.

“The French push, north of Verdun” (*Succès et Victoires*, No. 287, October 29th, 1917), “culminating in the recapture of Fort Douaumont, set on fire and evacuated by the Germans, constitutes a successful secondary operation, and is a local success that no one will seek to underrate. It is a *moral rather than a strategic* success, which the French Press will

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

contrive to emphasize, especially at the moment, when it will be desirable to divert public attention from the *great military events* which are pursuing their course in Rumania, and also, doubtless, on the Somme, where the great allied offensive has not succeeded in breaking the enemy's line of resistance. . . ."

And that is how defeats are turned into victories !

It is equally necessary to exalt the good qualities of the Boche soldier, whom this naturalized Bavarian compares with *Cæsar's men* (No. 337, January 25th, 1917) :

" . . . Cæsar's soldiers, who ate bread made of straw in the trenches of Durazzo, were so devoted to their chief that they fought without pay, living in a fraternal communism of suffering and hope. And when they had suffered cruelly, they crushed under their hardened fists and by the moral force of their souls immuned to war the brilliant army of Pompey.

"Some men are broken by hardship ; others hardship exalts and strengthens.

"Among these were the Romans of Cæsar,  
The Germans of Hindenburg too !"

Since then the Allies have continued their successes, and Hindenburg is forced to shorten his front and fall back on Saint-Quentin ; the Aisne offensive is begun, but " the valour of the German troops has frustrated the grandly conceived and well-prepared plans of General Nivelle ; they have fallen back on the position prepared for them.

"And this hour when the guns roar louder than ever, and when the fate of armies is in the balance, may be the decisive hour of this great war. Leaders and men stand united in one single destiny, that of their country, and this patriotism of a whole people, facing danger erect, with flashing eye and proud soul, adds its solemn gravity to the vernal joy of the birthday of Crown Prince William, whose armies, shoulder to shoulder, have victoriously held back for thirty-three

## The Great Offensives

months, in a long and bitter struggle, the numerical superiority of a valiant foe striving with all the fire of a consuming patriotism to reconquer his invaded soil " (No. 393, May 6th, 1917).

In conclusion, the French offensives of the Aisne and in Champagne are considered as equivalent to a great German victory.

" Altogether they have suffered a catastrophic check. All the French statements, intended to calm the French people and deceive the neutrals, cannot alter the fact that the French and British attempts to break through have completely failed, and have brought no appreciable result when one considers the vast objectives they had in view " (June 21st, 1917).

After the failure of Russia, Germany again raised her head. The offensives on the French front are over. The results are known. Calais is about to fall; Paris will not hold out long. It can be imagined how Prévost's pen, and especially that of the military bureau, ran over the paper. Nothing can resist the rampart of brass formed by the German army, the steel arms of Ludendorff's invincible warriors.

But the results of the March offensive on the Somme had prompted the Entente Governments to create a single command of the Allied armies, and they had chosen General Foch for this position of trust.

This didn't suit the Boche General Staff. Through the accommodating Prévost they at once began to jeer clumsily at the decision of the inter-Allied Council :

" General Foch," says this scribbling reptile in No. 608, April 20th, 1918, " the supreme hope of the Entente, is a successful soldier, who showed his capacity in 1916 as Commander-in-Chief of the French armies in the Battle of the Somme. . . .

" Will he succeed where Joffre, Nivelle, Pétain have failed in turn? Let us await the verdict of the future." (Prévost is getting prudent.)



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

The English, according to him, did not accept this choice without reserve, and Ludendorff's tool tries to prove this by publishing extracts from certain English newspapers opposed to unity of command.

Of course, the *Gazette* set up against Foch the illustrious military reputation of the Crown Prince, the hero of *La Friture*. It seizes the opportunity of his Highness's thirty-seventh birthday for this. We find this article in No. 621, May 5th, 1918 :

" In the annals of this long and bitter struggle against a brave enemy, superior in numbers and in *matériel*, the armies grouped under the command ( ? ? ? ) of Crown Prince William have held for more than three and a half years a place of honour. Soldiers of the Argonne and Champagne, who will ever tell the epic of your deeds of arms ? All who have had the opportunity of seeing you chatting with your chief, looking straight into his bright eyes, have felt the breath of that friendly simplicity, that beautiful camaraderie which the Imperial Prince diffuses around him and which clings to the folds of your flags under the May sky.

" And certainly, if from the Elysian heights the piercing eye of the great Frederic looks down on this prince, who is to inherit the crown he so gloriously wore, he who understood these things as few have understood them, will feel the wind of victory disturbing the air of this spring of 1918. . . . "

The events from March to June, 1918, are described in the true Prévost manner. Nothing can resist the onrush of the Germans ; the British army is completely routed, and the French divisions, hastily thrown into the battle, are powerless to stem the tumultuous torrent which the genius of Foch and the intervention of America have failed to dam. Mr. Wilson, the apostle of right and civilization (this is the ironical description of the President of the United States), is repeatedly ridiculed, and General Pershing's army is described as a collection of men dressed as soldiers, who will be unable to save England and France from the final debacle.

Nevertheless, the failure of the June offensive at Com-

## The Great Offensives

piège, which was a very great German defeat—for Ludendorff's plan was virtually frustrated on the Matz—embarrasses Prévost. The reader must be deceived. As the German *communiqués* allow the truth to be read between the lines and revive hopes, it is necessary to sow mistrust. The former correspondent of the *Dernières nouvelles de Munich* can find nothing better than the reproduction of French articles that have appeared before this great failure was known.

“As the French newspapers,” says the *Gazette* of June 13th, 1918, “only reach us after several days' delay, our readers will here find a retrospective, and perhaps for that reason *all the more striking*, review of the situation. Events follow one another with dizzy rapidity. At the moment of writing, the Germans have attacked, *with what result is already known*, near Noyon, and the battle at Soissons and Rheims is already over. This battle the French Press calls ‘the Battle of Paris,’ a name inspired partly *with the intention of exaggerating the enemy's objective in order to make it more easy to make out that he has been finally held up, partly from fear*. Yes, fear had been reigning in Paris for some days when the importance of the German attack west of Soissons became known. . . . Judge for yourselves. . . .”

And the editor's scissors mutilated a number of newspapers, bringing together cleverly and skilfully combining parts of sentences. Among them is the *Journal du Peuple*, of June 1st. Malevolent as he is, this renegade notes that the impassioned attacks of this paper on M. Clemenceau have an ill effect on the occupied country; he puts his readers on their guard by adding that: “*Le Journal du Peuple* is rushing into a bold and, it seems to us, premature campaign against the President of the Council.”

But to counteract the articles of that section of the Press which is regarded in the Avenue de la Gare as Chauvinist and pro-revenge, and which affirms that in spite of everything the enemy will not break through, he concludes by saying:

“We think it useful to point out that from now onwards the point of view from which the French Press has judged this

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

series of operations now being carried through might easily be refuted by the facts. One event follows another, and any one of these may completely change the immediate or ultimate effect of those which went before."

Indeed, the hour of Germany's defeat had already struck!

In the issue of the following June 20th, No. 659, the General Staff felt the necessity of administering a cold douche to the confidence of the inhabitants of the occupied area.

The following was received from the German front:

"The *great success* of our armies between Montdidier and Noyon has shown that the Germans are capable of breaking through the most firmly defended front, even when it has been prepared for the attack. . . .

". . . In their order of the day the French leaders ordered their men to hold their positions to the last man. In spite of this, *the new German offensive was completely successful*.

"After his memorable defeat of June 11th, the enemy resolved, on the following day, to renew the attack in great strength, supported by large numbers of Tanks. After severe fighting he was thrown back with losses. . . . The fruitless attacks of the French have considerably augmented the bloody losses they have already suffered." . . .

But the *Generalstab* omits to mention that the Crown Prince, who had already packed his boxes ready to occupy the Castle of Compiègne, came back, after his failure, to take up his quarters once more in the Villa Renaudin, where he was to remain until his flight into Holland.

According to information obtained from authoritative sources at G.H.Q., the German offensives were the Kaiser's supreme effort to force a decisive success before American help was brought to bear. The defection of the Russian army made it possible to bring to the Western Front sufficient reinforcements to justify a swift and vigorous offensive, which was to force the Entente to sue for peace. Moreuil was the first disappointment; the Compiègne defensive proved such an overwhelming German defeat, that Ludendorff's plans were



## The Great Offensives

completely upset. Finally, according to this same authoritative source, the Champagne offensive was the last spring of the hard-pressed beast, which intended to rend its enemy or perish under his blows. The second alternative was realized.

Meanwhile the United States was working a miracle: her fleets of transports were unceasingly pouring out men and guns, and soon the ocean of our countless armies (quoted from a speech at a distribution of prizes to school children) in the occupied area was submerging the quicksands of barbarism.

What a nightmare American help was to the Kaiser! What a sphinx was Wilson to the Imperial Chancellory!

The *Gazette des Ardennes* reflects exactly the thoughts of the Government and the High Command. To begin with, Prévost tries flattery when the President of the United States, on December 22nd, 1916, sent to the belligerent Powers a Note, in which "he insists, before everything else, on ending the present war."

"At this moment," according to the *Gazette* of December 30th, 1916, No. 322 (*L'idée généreuse*), "the voice of the President is a generous voice whose sincere loyalty no one will dare to doubt."

Soon the tone changes. Mr. Wilson's ideas don't suit the ambitious plans of William II.; the submarines have sunk American ships and murdered citizens of free America, who is asking for explanations. The "sincere loyalty" of the eminent statesman becomes suspect. "He thinks he is going to conduct the choir of neutrals (March 4th, 1917). He had already sent them a Note asking them to follow him; already he had raised his conductor's baton. But when he looked around him, to his astonishment there was no one there. In any case, Mr. Wilson must be laughing on the wrong side of his face.

"As he is a great philosopher, he will not fail to reflect on the causes of this diplomatic fiasco.

"*The League of Nations will have no moral authority.*

"You have missed the opportune moment, Mr. Wilson! You are too late!"



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

In September, 1917, the Alsatian, who has asked for his Bavarian naturalization papers, grows violent, sometimes coarse :

" There was a time when Mr. Wilson posed as an independent and honest man. At that time he was seeking the votes of the American people, the majority of whom he knew to be in favour of peace.

" To-day he seems to have forgotten his promises. By wedding himself to the Entente cause, to save the compromised interests of a powerful financial clique, Mr. Wilson has found himself forced to assume responsibility for their repertory of hollow phrases and worn-out lies ! What a downfall for a philosopher ! Our readers know that we are not prejudiced against Mr. Wilson. We have courteously accepted statements in which he posed as the apostle of a peace of conciliation.

" It is not our judgment that has changed since, it is Mr. Wilson's attitude ! Since he has thrown down the mask, how could we continue to regard him as the ' arbiter ' he used to profess to be ? To-day Mr. Wilson pours out accusations in and out of season, and the exasperated tone of his philippics reveals in itself the weakness of the cause he has insisted on espousing after frivolously confusing it " (*Le Compère de M. Wilson*, No. 456, September 8th, 1917).

† Mr. Wilson is not supported by the nation. An American tells us this in the *Gazette* of September 9th, 1917, No. 457 (*L'enthousiasme guerrier des Etats-Unis*) :

" . . . After reading the American newspapers, one gathers that Mr. Wilson's war is not in the least a war of the American people. There is no enthusiasm for the ' crusade ' preached by Wilson and Roosevelt.

" No, the American State, which has shown the greatest enthusiasm for Mr. Wilson's policy, and which, for that reason, must be considered the pillar of patriotism, civilization and humanity—is Hawaii ! . . . The descendants of the cannibals who killed and ate Captain Cook, these ' Americans '

## The Great Offensives

of yesterday, since they have only been annexed about fifteen years, these islanders, who, because of the colour of their skin, are deeply scorned by every white American, they are the true, the good, the only Americans after the heart of Messrs. Wilson and Roosevelt."

"A Frenchman" goes one better than "An American." After grossly insulting the "protagonists of the French idea, whose names are Barrès, Lavedan and Richepin," this crazed correspondent of the *Gazette* expresses himself as follows :

*"Don't come insulting reason and humanity by calling an abominable alliance neutrality."*

"All who read this quotation will, as I have done, immediately apply it to the man who to-day governs the United States of America more tyrannically than any despot, the man who in his pride thinks himself the arbiter of the world's destinies : I mean Mr. Wilson.

"This man, who gets up on the other side of the earth and has the audacity to dictate laws to foreign nations, this blood-thirsty fanatic, who finds that the slaughter has not lasted long enough, but that a few hundred thousand more innocent people must be killed so that, not his ideas, but his prejudices may triumph, this tool of plutocrats who imagines that the strings by which he is worked are in his own hands, this is the mask beneath which he hides from us his real face, and this mask, Châteaubriand has been careful to tell us, covers injustice and hypocrisy" ("Thoughts on Mr. Wilson, by A Frenchman," No. 468, October 2nd, 1917).

The League of Nations does not find favour in the eyes of "la Belle Fatma." "This league, of which Wilson and Barrès dream, would only be one more instrument for bringing about, in the guise of reparation, the economic ruin and political bondage of Germany" (October 19th, 1917).

The faithful collaborator of the accommodating agent of Boche G.H.Q. calms their fears of *L'Aide américaine* (No. 428, July 8th, 1917) :

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

" . . . As a matter of fact, the rulers of France and England know very well that the hope of effective military help from the United States is absolutely vain. . . . They are making play with the immense armies that Mr. Wilson is sending from America.

" . . . As a matter of fact, during these five months the United States have been satisfied with giving financial assistance. This does not greatly affect the situation.

" The idea of sending millions of her sons to be maimed and killed in Europe does not attract her in the least.

" I am not speaking of the insurmountable difficulty of sending such an army at a time when the Allies have not enough ships for their most pressing needs. Even if these difficulties of transport did not exist, I venture to prophesy, from my knowledge of my countrymen, that we shall never send a real American army to Europe, and that any hope founded on such an army will only serve to increase the disappointment of the French people."

This article gave the wit of the Avenue de la Gare a chance to jeer clumsily at the arrival of the first regiments, for he added as a postscript :

" This article was written before the arrival of the first American contingent in France. Our readers know that a show battalion has been quartered at the Palais des Expositions (Paris, Champs-Élysées).—*Le Réd.*"

The inspiration of " An American " is inexhaustible. A month later he " hatches " a new article on " The American Troops in France " (No. 444, August 11th, 1917). The Americans cannot stand being ordered about, so they have no discipline.

The American army, which went on swelling the ranks of the Entente, was not the only thorn in the side of Hindenburg and Ludendorff. Foch had stopped the spring of the beast at bay, and he was beginning to drive him back to his lair before the force of his repeated death-dealing blows. It was still, however, necessary to lie and to deceive the German people



## The Great Offensives

to the last. The tool of G.H.Q. was charged with this arduous task.

This was a task after his own heart.

The infamous *Gazette* had all the audacity and all the faults which are particularly characteristic of the Boche. Cunning, lying and arrogance have always been his strong points. No one knew so well as the *Gazette* how to twist the truth. As it had shown itself arrogant and implacable when the fortune of war seemed to favour Hindenburg and Ludendorff, beside whom Napoleon was nothing but a drummer-boy, so now, when the tide of fortune turned, it contrived to twist the truth in favour of the German command.

As we have seen, Prévost had managed to disguise the events of June, and transform into an important success a check which, as the General Staff itself confessed, constituted a serious defeat.

How, then, was he to set about announcing to his readers the shattering results of Foch's counter-offensive?

A certain uneasiness becomes noticeable when he comes to prophesy the final victory of Bochedom. Prévost makes reservations, and the American intervention pains him. Nevertheless, like a child passing through a wood at night and singing as loud as he can to drown the fear that grips him, he clutches at the statement of a Socialist Deputy in the French Chamber, when the plan of calling up the 1920 class was under discussion, to say in the *Gazette* of August 9th:

"If the French Government was as sure of the efficacy of American help as it pretends to be, it would wait for this to materialize and spare France the new sacrifices that are being called for.

"But it is realized that, even if the Americans arrive in force, *it will take them a long time to become an army*. Meanwhile the German army is there, stronger than ever since it got rid of the Russian menace.

"The generalissimo, Foch, must know that it will take the Americans a long time—whatever their individual qualities may be—to form themselves into a *military organization* capable of replacing in the scale the other *chosen, trained and countless army* that Czarist Russia had placed at the service of



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

the Entente, and which has crumpled under the blows of the German army."

This Franco-Anglo-American army, however, at which the noble Prévost sneers, is continuing its victorious advance. He can't deny it; but, according to him, if the Boches are falling back it is because they choose to do so.

"This German withdrawal was, moreover, not unforeseen (No. 701, 9th August, 1918). Informed circles knew about it some time ago. The German command has always remained master of its own movements; it keeps the initiative, and, whereas the German troops are getting nearer to their base and are shortening their lines of communication, the situation is becoming less favourable to the enemy.

"The German command is awaiting the enemy in a more favourable position, on a shorter front, with a reinforced army and with better communications. It has retained liberty of movement. . . .

"... The German withdrawal is merely a tactical move, which is only of local importance, for the victorious offensive of 27th May last, which was pressed as far as the Marne, was not intended to pass the Vesle. The ground which the German army has just yielded, was, therefore, only the surplus gain of a victory which surpassed all expectations."

And the *Gazette* accused the French journalists of misleading the public!

On 24th August it declared that "those who thought the German army defeated have been cruelly deceived.

"... Foch's offensive, cleverly prepared and ably carried out, has produced *partial* results which we should not think of depreciating, without, however, attaining its *strategic* objective. . . .

"... The least one can say is that the great offensive of Marshal Foch has failed no less than all the preceding attempts to break through the German front. This front, which no effort has been able to break, do they really hope to break it to-day or to-morrow, even with the help of *the negro army*

## The Great Offensives

*from America, which could never replace the countless hordes of inexhaustible Russia ? ”*

In October the advance of the Entente armies takes a prodigious leap forward. The Hindenburg Line, which was never to be crossed, is broken ; they cross the Suippe and enter the department of the Ardennes, hitherto completely occupied. The *Gazette* is not to be beaten. Marshal Foch hoped to bring off a decisive victory.

“ And, moreover, the impossibility of breaking through the German front seems once more clearly demonstrated by the series of checks to the various efforts of the last three months. It seems *certain* then, that the *fifth winter*, now approaching, will see the front become rigid again without the attainment of the military decision sought by Marshal Foch. Once again this great and decisive victory has eluded the Allied command ” (No. 747, 3rd October, 1918).

Finally, on 11th October (No. 754), when Cambrai and Saint-Quentin have fallen into our hands, when the French army is marching on the Aisne and the despised American army, after flattening the Saint-Mihiel salient, is making appreciable progress in the Argonne, the amateur strategist Prévost brings in the notorious military critic of the *Bund* of Berne and the *Basler Nachrichten* of Bâle, the ineffable Colonel Egli, in the pay of the Boche G.H.Q.

“ More than ever,” according to Prévost, “ the French and British *communiqués* are edited with a view to deliberate propaganda. . . . From every point of view they are exaggerated. It is necessary to get the right perspective. . . . ”

The inimitable professor of tactics therefore declares in all seriousness that :

“ . . . A visit that he has just paid to the Western Front has given him the impression that the German High Command is far from having played all its trumps ; its tactics consist in restraining and wearing out the enemy's strength, while husbanding as far as possible that of Germany.”

After that date the mouthpiece of G.H.Q. grows tearful. He bewails :

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

" . . . the accumulating destruction which could have been avoided for the most part, if the nations had responded to the peace proposals put forward time and again by Germany.

" For two years we should have been living in peace ! We should have spared the lives of several million men ; and Saint-Quentin, Péronne, Noyon, Montdidier, Lens, Cambrai would not have been destroyed."

But the mad dog still shows his fangs ; Prévost still threatens.

" Where will the work of destruction stop ?

" To the towns already mentioned must we add Lille, Tourcoing, Roubaix, Laon, Mézières, Charleville, Sedan ? Or will it be possible to spare them the horrors of war ? . . ." (*La Tragédie Quotidienne*, No. 758, 16th October, 1918).

He makes one last attempt on 20th October, 1918 ; but this time his instrument is out of tune, he strikes a false note in a supreme insult against the French Press.

We quote from *Récit de Bataille* (No 762) :

" So, when the journalists are writing that the resistance is broken, the ' poilus ' and the ' Yanks ' can only shrug their shoulders ; they cannot help saying that these scribblers need only take part for a moment in the battle, for their writing to assume a truer tone. Behind the rampart (no longer of brass) which forms the German front, the German troops are falling back on new positions. *Must these, too, be defended ?* If so, we can rely confidently, as for the defence of the others, on the valour of the troops, who will add one more heroic page to the history of the war."

It is no longer a hymn of victory ; it is the swan's song.

Finally, one month to the day after the prognostications of the fabulous Colonel Egli, the Government of Max of Baden, in order to avoid the capitulation of the invincible Hindenburg's invincible army, accepted the conditions of armistice proposed by Foch, and the divine Kaiser and the peerless Crown Prince were begging hospitality from the Queen of Holland.

 In spite of these childish rodomontades, by which the renegade sought to transform French victories into German successes, the *Liars' Gazette* did not cease to bleat in favour of



## The Great Offensives

peace. There was no pacifist movement that was not echoed in its columns, no calumny that it did not invent to represent France as the author of the war, still thirsting for carnage, still insatiable for blood.

In No. 717 (29th August, 1918) it even drags in the Czar, reproducing from a Zürich review declarations against M. Poincaré, said to have been made by Nicholas II.

"I am working for the peace of Europe," the victim of the Bolsheviks is alleged to have said, on the occasion of the President's last visit to Russia; "Poincaré is working for the recapture of Alsace and Lorraine."

And the dethroned sovereign is supposed to have added :  
"Poincaré's arrogance is a menace to peace."

In the same number, M. Clemenceau is abused by a "*Parisian mechanic, taken from a factory and made prisoner.*"

This fellow—who posed as the representative of a society of metal-workers, congratulated himself on having freed himself from the Tiger's claws and was enjoying the amenities of Boche hospitality—calls on "the bloodthirsty old man, who, with the collaboration of England, has made himself a dictator, to use his talents, if he has any, to bring about a reconciliation of the nations and to suppress discord and enmity. . . .

The treacherous lunatic, signing himself "*Saint-Just*," played his part in the pacifist concert, with a series of articles headed : "*Defeatism. The Entente refuses peace.*"

"It is for such reasons as these that Germany, unable to wait any longer, had recourse to the most formidable offensive that has ever been waged on any theatre of war.

"Meanwhile, the defeatist pack, unleashed with lashing whips, bays death to the enemy, to valiant Germany. *He* is fighting for his life ! And you, leaders of France, what are you fighting for ? The defeatism of the *Victoire Intégrale*" (13th June, 1918).

On 17th October President Wilson is put against the wall. He is not ridiculed, he is flattered.

"To-day he has an unparalleled opportunity for proving the loftiness of his conscience and the sincerity of his principles. As for the German people, they too will know how to behave. Once they are rebuffed and once they realize that it is their very



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

life and honour that is being attacked, they will find renewed strength for a great revulsion of their unconquerable energy."

Some days before, on the receipt of the rejection of Austria's peace proposals, the *Gazette* of 25th September, in an article called "*Refus de causer*" expectorated its venomous deceit.

Commenting on an article of the official Austrian *Fremdenblatt*, it writes :

"To refuse to listen to the voice of peace, that is the true, the only confession of weakness. If the Entente was so sure of victory why should she tremble before the prospect of a frank discussion, binding to nothing, but helping to focus things? . . ."

Prévost then called on M. Clemenceau to act :

"Yes, Monsieur Clemenceau ! The battered world awaits the solution of the great struggle that rends it."

The last numbers of October had become a mere beggar's whine, asking for "Peace, please, for love of poor Germany !"

The victories of Marshal Foch and his heroic poilus supplied an eloquent answer.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE END OF THE DRAMA

The rule of the Lines of Communication Inspection.—The sincerity of Heydebreck.—The exploits of the looters.—Porcher.—The caddishness of a thief.—Domiciliary searches.—The requisitioners and their "leetle pusiness."—Art treasures as bad debts.—Brotherhood in arms as understood by the Boche.—A drawing-room becomes a barber's shop and a dining-room a canteen.—Copper first, then bells, organs, art treasures and statues.—Men and women requisitioned.—Slaves and convicts.—Enemies of morality.—Treatment of girls.—Crime and *lèse-majesté*.—The flag the forerunner of victory.—Arrival of the exiles.—The incendiaries.—Germany's agony.—The defence of the Meuse.—"Keep calm."—A vigorous method of ensuring calm.—Mining works of art.—Final instructions.—The military police harnessed to carts.—Everything is blown up.—G.H.Q.'s pledge.—The last Boche leaves.—Arrival of the first poilu.—Greeting the aeroplanes.—Deliverance.—Still Barbarians.—How G.H.Q. kept its word.—Bombardment of unfortified and ungarrisoned towns.—The hospitals bombarded.—Mézières hospital set on fire.—The attack on Belair.—The Armistice.—We've got them!

WITH the *Gazette des Ardennes* disappeared, on the 25th October, 1918, the last traces of G.H.Q., which had virtually left Charleville on 16th August, 1916, and officially in February, 1917. After 1917 the administration was in the hands of the terrible Inspectorate of Lines of Communications of the First Army. The earlier *Kommandantur* had exercised a certain moderation in their relations with the civilian population, but under Lieutenant-General von Heydebreck, of sinister memory, the inhabitants of the district of the old G.H.Q., and especially the communal organizations, tasted the hardship of Boche oppression. We cannot set down in detail the

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

endless persecutions that the three towns suffered, a volume would not suffice.

During the presence of the Kaiser the chief thefts, apart from the pillaging of cellars and furniture, were those of factory material by Krupp, Mannesmann, Roechling and Co. A special department of the War Ministry helped them in their work of plunder and regularized under the guise of requisition the official thieving. The manufacturers from beyond the Rhine inspected the factories, chose the machinery to be removed, and on the following day the representative of the War Ministry, Porcher, came to take it over for immediate transport. These plunderings were conducted ruthlessly, and, once emptied, the factory presented a most forlorn aspect : a fire or a bombardment would have done less damage to the building. Sometimes the thieves indulged in friendly little jokes. One day an officer came to remove the material and copper from the works of Hardy-Capitaine-Crepel & Co. at Nouzon. The owner, M. Léon Crepel, mayor of the town and an estimable patriot who always showed a firm front to the *Kommandantur* and the different German services, was present at this criminal exhibition and could not restrain his indignation.

The thief pretended to be sorry for him and in a soothing tone said : " I understand your feelings, monsieur. Unfortunately it is not in my power to do anything for you. I receive orders and I am forced to obey. Alas ! It is war ! But don't worry, we will send them back soon."

As he went out he shouted with an insolent roar of laughter : " In the form of shells, Monsieur le Maire, in the form of shells ! "

And to think that M. Crepel was unable to hit this cad ! Such an action would have cost him too dear.

Thenceforward, under the L. of C. Inspection, of which Count Arnim was the servile tool and Lieutenant Löhr the savage representative, persecution made rapid strides. The rifling of cellars was redoubled and private houses were searched for any little wine, metal and furniture that might be left.

The requisitioning of copper was announced by a notice

## The End of the Drama

which the municipality refused to post; it was forced to obey. The inhabitants were to bring all copper to a stated depot, where they were to receive a ridiculous remuneration. As may be imagined, practically nobody responded. The *Kommandantur* were annoyed, and, since the French appeared ill-disposed to work against their country, very well! the requisition service would remove the copper from their houses. Many hid their copper, a great number threw it into the river, but, in spite of everything, some copper articles remained that could not be moved or seemed likely to be spared. They trusted in the declaration of the *Kommandantur* that bronze or metal articles "of a purely artistic nature" would be exempt from requisition.

This was an impudent display of Boche cynicism. German Jews were charged with the work and lodged and fed, by German orders, at the expense of the town. According to them, nothing was of a purely artistic nature. Everything was classified as decorative or commercial art and consequently requisitionable. They were taken in wagons to the depot where the game was carefully organized. Articles of common metal were broken up at once, others were put on one side and were sent intact to Germany to be sold. This "leettle pusiness" was thus justified. Splendid *Barbediennes*, beautiful antique goblets were lifted and paid for with a voucher for a few sous. In 1918 not even a voucher was given. In addition patriotic offenders were punished with stiff fines which went to swell the war chest of William II.

The quarters of French officers were the scene of nameless scandals. Insignia of the Legion of Honour were torn from their frames and trampled underfoot. The drawing-room of Colonel Choisy, of the 91st regiment, was turned into a barber's shop and his dining-room into a canteen. Widows, whose husbands had fallen on the field of honour, were subjected to outrageous annoyance. Like the Conventions of the Hague and Geneva, the sacred pact of brotherhood in arms was shamelessly trampled on.

Then came the requisitioning of church bells, organ-pipes, art treasures. Mattresses were taken not only from the hale and well but also from the aged and people in hospital;



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

bedding had to be taken to a depot and was replaced by infected straw mattresses crawling with vermin.

All males between twelve and sixty-five, who could possibly be mobilized, discharged soldiers, cripples, invalids, it was all the same, were compelled to do forced labour with a discrimination which proved the barbarity of their persecutors. Factory hands were put to work in the fields and farm-labourers at the furnaces or smelting works. The liberal professions were condemned to the hardest tasks; the very children were taken from their homes and sent to within a few kilometres behind the front to gather the fruit for jam-making.

The women, regardless of their moral or social condition, soon followed the men. All the unfortunate women between thirteen and sixty were compelled to perform the work of convicts, felling trees in the forests, making roads and laying railways or carrying loads from the market, unloading trains or boat-loads of coal or stone. Young girls of good family or education were sent almost up to the firing-line, where they had to associate with prostitutes. They carried out faithfully the German Staff's devilish plan, which was to destroy everywhere labour, land, cleanliness, the home, the family, morality.

The Staff was faithfully seconded by the infamous labour-bureaux. Captains Patushka and Pfulfe were the presiding devils at the *Bureau central de l'Inspection*, Lieutenant Zimmermann and his secretary, a lean brigand called d'Istel, being the heroes of the *bureau de l'Etape*. Not only did they jibe with their coarse jests at the misfortune of these poor creatures, but at the least movement they ill-treated and tortured them at will.

The towns themselves suffered their persecutions. The statues and public monuments were taken down without warning. This last act roused indignation. On 7th April, 1918, a figure of a little Italian beggar was placed on the patriotic monument raised to the memory of the Ardennais who died for their country during the war of 1870-71. This childishness, which would only have raised a smile in a French officer, was a crime against the Carolopolitains.

They contrived to make it a crime of *lèse-majesté*.

## The End of the Drama

A few months before, a humorist had posted up a caricature of *l'Assiette de Beurre* representing the Kaiser, a broken sword in his hand, standing near some barrels, on which was written "dry powder" and this legend: "Take care, William, if you try so hard to dry your powder it may blow you up!"

Some time afterwards another mischievous wit cut out from the infamous *Gazette* a cartoon showing M. Clemenceau as an executioner shouting: "Whose turn next?" The anonymous wit had added: "William's!"

This was an attack on the honour of the respectable monarch; the incident of the little Italian was taken as a protest against the requisitioning of metals. The Municipal Commission was made responsible for finding the criminals. It refused and a fine of 10,000 marks was inflicted on the town.

On the following 14th July another unknown person placed a splendid French flag on the roof of the new artillery barracks which dominated the town. Again the Municipal Commission was ordered to find the offender; again it refused: fine, 30,000 marks.

Meanwhile the situation was changing rapidly. The Germans could no longer hide their defeat and retreat. The convoys of refugees from the front, sad processions of homeless people who, after a last look at the home in which their father had died, their children been born, had seen it pillaged and set on fire by the enemy, were arriving in thousands, bringing away only what they could carry. The German convoys were retreating in disorder; the German army was at the last gasp. The first thing they did was to remove the men between eighteen and fifty-five and intern them in a school. But victory was already hovering over us, we no longer feared the German threats; the "Marseillaise" rang out from every throat and no order could silence the singers. Löhr, the adjutant of the *Kommandatur*, ordered a platoon to advance with loaded rifles. This was on the 1st November. Very opportunely an army order set the captives at liberty; they paraded the streets shouting: "Vive la France!" No one dared suppress them. Arnim was beginning to get frightened.

Prisoners of war from the camps were streaming in from all directions and making for Belgium. It made one's heart

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

ache to see these poor wretches, without clothing and without boots, begging for food ; they were all dying of starvation.

The *Kommandatur* could no longer hide the disaster and had to make preparations for departure.

Earlier, when the Germans intended to hold the line of the Meuse, the inhabitants of places on the right bank of the river were forced to cross to the left bank, and this was the case with the part of Mézières on that bank. They also wanted to clear Charleville, but the inhabitants, intending to welcome the French troops whatever happened, flatly refused.

After this deliverance comes nearer ; the guns roar unceasingly, the German *communiqués* grow more and more significant : the Aisne is crossed and despair comes over the faces of the officers. Now no one doubts any longer that in a very few days the French will be at our doors.

On 4th November, Count Arnim summons the mayors of Charleville and Mohon, reveals the situation and begs them to keep the population calm. To ensure this he posts at the same time the following notice :

“ The municipality has been asked to inform the public that collecting in the streets and any demonstrations on the part of the masculine population must be avoided at all costs.

“ Offenders will be punished with the utmost severity.”

On 5th November another order :

“ By order of the *Kommandatur* of Lines of Communication, the population is informed that, after 7 a.m. on the 7th November, the inhabitants must not leave their houses. They may only go out in cases of absolute necessity, for example : to fetch food or to fetch the doctor, or on the service of the military and municipal authorities.

“ It is also illegal to stand in the streets or in the squares ; no more than two persons must go out together for the purposes mentioned above.

“ The population are advised to keep absolutely calm while the troops are passing.



## The End of the Drama

"It is strictly forbidden for anyone to enter a house not his own; anyone caught removing furniture or anything at all will be severely punished.

"Any offence against the above regulations may involve a minimum penalty of three months 'imprisonment' or even, in serious cases, death."

In addition, four guns are placed at the four exits of the Place Ducale in case of a demonstration.

The schools are opened; the priests may celebrate mass—the Boche ministers no longer interfere with their work—but without appealing to the people to attend; funerals may take place as usual, but only members of the family are authorized to attend; the reserves of supplies are distributed so that, in case of bombardment, or evacuation, everyone shall be sure of his supply of food.

Then the Germans mine the railways, all works of art and the Charleville station. The municipality, in view of these preparations, asks Count Arnim that the inhabitants may be warned in advance of the time when these are to be blown up. He replies that it is not possible to grant this request, as the order may arrive suddenly in the night, and there will be no time to warn the parts of the town that are in danger.

A third order dealing with the prohibition of appearing in the streets reached the town hall. During the passing of the troops doors and shutters must be hermetically closed and no civilian may be in the streets on the line of march.

Hostages are arrested to guarantee the observation of the military regulations.

At last, on the 7th, the town receives final instructions from the *Kommandatur* of Lines of Communication, as follows :

"By order of the *Kommandatur* of Lines of Communication, the contents of the following notice are to be made known to the population :

"If the negotiations entered into with the French Government are broken off, the fighting will be continued.

"In this case the military authorities do not intend to clear the population from the towns to send them into Belgium : the population will remain in their homes.



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

"As soon as the German troops have withdrawn and when the fighting comes near the town, persons armed with a white flag should go to meet the French patrols.

"The authorities of the town will take care to place white flags on the churches and high buildings of the town.

"These orders will be communicated to the French Commander-in-Chief.

"The population is urged to reserve a certain quantity of provisions and in all circumstances to preserve absolute calm.

"G.H.Q., 7th November, 1918.

(Signed) "COUNT ARNIM,

"Major and O.C."

On the same day the Crown Prince handed over the keys of the Villa Renaudin and took the road into exile, followed, on the next day, at 3 p.m., by the *Kommandatur* and military police, who, having had stolen from them the only horse that remained to them, were obliged to harness themselves to the carriage to remove their baggage.

Arnim sent his last order, that all houses within a radius of three hundred metres of the railway should be evacuated, to avoid possible accidents from the blowing up of bridges, stations and railway-lines.

This was the last act of the tragedy before the final apotheosis!

The whole day, while the guns roared within a short radius, chiefly from the direction of Sedan, the sound of numerous explosions came from the Hirson railway; the permanent way was blown up at intervals of fifty metres, hurling to great distances rails, stones and bolts.

In the direction of Tournes, formidable detonations were heard. It was a munitions train that the German looters had blown up. The whole night these infernal noises were heard in Charleville, and the horizon glared with the light of the fires.

The 9th November was a memorable date, for on that day the French troops of the armies of Guillaumat and Gouraud took possession of Charleville and Mézières, and

## The End of the Drama

brought them once more under the direct administration of the Motherland.

At 7 a.m. the O.C. of the troops left in Charleville (a battery of field artillery) informed the municipality that the French were near the town, and that it would be wise to fly the white flag. At the same time a note arrived from the High Command, announcing that the German Government had informed the French Government by wireless that the German army would refrain from firing on Mézières and Charleville for a period of forty-eight hours, provided that the French troops did not enter these towns. This cessation of fire to commence at 10 a.m. on November 9th.

Under these circumstances the Commission decided to send M. Paul Gailly, Vice-President of the Municipal Commission, and the author of these lines, as bearers of the white flag to the French Commander-in-Chief, to communicate to him the intentions of the German Command.

They had scarcely left the outskirts of the town when they were greeted by a squadron of French aeroplanes, valiant birds of France, coming, heedless of the hail of German shell, to announce to the inhabitants the arrival of the poilus.

After a halt of a few minutes at La Bellevue du Nord, to await the safe-conduct, which had been forgotten, the two representatives were preparing to continue their journey, when a scout of the 14th Regiment of Hussars appeared at full gallop on the Tournes road, and received from M. Gailly the German order for transmission to the French Command. It was an unforgettable moment. The good trooper was literally buried under hastily gathered flowers; the flags appeared from their hiding-places, and everyone wept for joy. Shortly afterwards a patrol of the same regiment arrived under an N.C.O., Quartermaster-Sergeant Duprat, who went on to Charleville, where he got into touch with the Municipal Commission. It was 10.40 (French time), an historic minute!

Immediately the whole town came out to greet them, shouting "Vive la France!" In less time than it takes to write it, the National colours burst out from every house.

This patrol was followed by a reconnoitring party, under Captain Jubault, who posted pickets near the artillery barracks,

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

in the riding school of which the Kaiser had installed his chapel, and where a plaster eagle spread its wings, and a party of cavalry of the 4th Squadron, 14th Hussars. The last German had left the municipal area at 11.10 (10.15 French time).

Throughout the day Charleville was as animated as on the great festival days, joy at deliverance beamed in every face.

At 6 p.m. the 2nd Battalion, 117th Infantry Regiment, took over the town : this was the reply to the German Government.

The Germans would not have been worthy of their reputation as barbarians if they had left the town without ravaging and destroying. In the morning of the 9th they had blown up the Mézières citadel, the tunnel, the railway-bridges, the aqueducts and the station at Charleville. The damage was appalling ; it was a scene of absolute desolation, all the more monstrous, as, in their fury, they had destroyed works that were of no military value.

But their exploits did not stop there ! In spite of the formal pledges of G.H.Q., Von Mudra's brigands dishonoured themselves once more, by bombarding, on November 10th, the open towns of Charleville and Mézières. When the bombardment opened, the 2nd Battalion, 117th Infantry Regiment, had been holding since the previous evening the outposts of La Villette-Belair. The whole night was disturbed by the roaring of cannon and the crackling of machine guns.

The morning of the 10th was quiet ; the population, given over to joy at their return to the great French family, were walking about the streets in great numbers, when, at 11.30, as the people were leaving high mass, the German batteries in the village of Aiglemont, on the Bertaucourt plateau, and at Saint-Laurent, opened a heavy fire which at first impressed nobody.

But at noon some of the shells which had been whistling over the town burst in several streets, demolishing some houses and killing four of the occupants. Five heavy shells fell on the civil hospital, and caused very serious damage. Once more the Huns were trampling the Geneva Convention



## The End of the Drama

under foot. They cannot deny that the Hôtel-Dieu was their objective, for, before the building was struck, seven shots were fired in that direction: five overreached the mark, two fell short, and the original five fell right on the huge building.

All day and all night the bombardment continued, but in the afternoon it was much more violent at Mézières than at Charleville, where, however, the fire was concentrated for a long time on the part of the town situated between the station and Mézières.

The unfortunate city, so battered in 1870, was not spared in 1918; the Faubourg d'Arches, Mézières-Centre, with the Hôtel de Ville and the old church, an historic monument, were partly destroyed. The Faubourg de Pierre received the full shock of the vandals' exasperation, and the Mézières Hospital was furiously bombarded. The shells set fire to the building, and the wretched patients and old people, as at Charleville, were carried into the cellars. The Saint-Louis Hospital is in ruins. The town archives of Mézières, the treasury and accountant's offices, and that of the syndicate for municipal relief, which had been transferred there after the evacuation of the *mairie*, no longer exist.

The bombardment continued throughout the night; towards eight o'clock in the morning, November 11th, it slackened considerably, and about ten o'clock, ceased altogether; the Boches had accepted the Armistice conditions, which was equivalent to an unconditional surrender.

The inhabitants of Charleville and Mézières deserve special mention for the calm and collected way in which they behaved during these days of agony.

A proof of civic courage was shown by more than five hundred people attending, at 2 p.m., on November 10th, the funeral of two poilus, who had died of their wounds and were buried while French fighting planes performed military honours and the German shells were falling on the town.

Meanwhile, the 117th occupied Belair. Their orders were to keep touch with the enemy, to clear the woods of hidden machine guns, to cross the Meuse and to take Hill 221.



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

The front held by this regiment stretched from Mézières to La Havetière wood. Colonel Vérignon, the O.C., had an anxious task, for, taken by an enfilading fire, he had to face the difficulties of a dangerous crossing, followed by the climbing of a steep slope. The Boches bombarded the village of Belair with asphyxiating shells, and set fire to six houses.

The fighting did not last long, and the losses, fortunately, were light : one man killed and several wounded. The losses of the 20th Battalion of Chasseurs, who had reinforced the 117th early in the evening, were more serious. The fighting lasted seventeen hours, and did not end until 11.9 a.m., on the order of the General Officer commanding the Army, who put an end to this violent engagement.

At ten o'clock a second order reached the corps commanders, telling them to remain in their positions and encamp.

The Armistice was an accomplished fact !

A great sigh of relief rose from every breast : the war was over, victory was won.

The German Empire, established at Sedan in 1870, crumbled into shame in 1918, also at Sedan.

Pétain had been right : we had got them !

## CHAPTER XXI

### CONCLUSION

#### THE MORAL OF THE FRENCH POPULATION IN THE OCCUPIED AREA

WHAT of the *moral* of the French population in the invaded territory during the long months of the German occupation, which seemed as though it would never end?

Certainly the Boche did all he could to depress our spirits, and weakness or faltering would have been almost excusable if the strength and energy to support suffering had become a little worn under the development of current events!

Indeed, everything appeared to combine to weaken the patriotism that reigned in every soul. Cut off as we were from all news from outside, unable to communicate with free France or with relatives who had remained on the other side of the front, the enemy had in his hands all the strongest cards for influencing public opinion, and he did not fail to use them.

From the first the occupation helped to spread erroneous information. The officers and men, in their conversation, obeyed the orders of the General Staff, to predict the invincibility of the Kaiser's armies and the certainty of their inevitable victory. The continual passing to and fro of troops between the Eastern and Western Fronts was not calculated to reassure the timorous; lying reports of the operations and their results were intended to put fear into the stoutest hearts, and the German Press, fed from the secret

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

funds of the reptiles' treasury, aimed at sowing fear and disappointment, by repeated offensives of the pen.

The official *communiqués*, which daily published reports of events, signed by Ludendorff, and the propaganda of the *Gazette des Ardennes*, had cleverly grasped the threads of the machiavellian scheme of the High Command to drive the masses to despair.

Well, in spite of these repeated assaults, the *moral* stood firm and unshaken; confidence and hope never forsook us. Yes, behind the German lines, as on the inviolate soil of France, everyone desired peace, but not the peace that the German diplomacy and General Staff proposed. Before everything else, we wanted the victory of Right, Liberty and Civilization, won by the Entente, and the peace that would follow such a victory. Those who took this message to their country were the authorized and sincere mouthpieces of our unfortunate compatriots bent beneath the yoke of the Barbarians, and the honourable senator, M. Touron, who carried it to the tribune of Parliament, accomplished a sacred duty in telling the truth. Even the pessimists among us, whom we called the "*Ça va mal*" ("Things are going badly"), and who always looked on the blackest side of the situation and could see no end to the nightmare, would not admit that the war could end without a victory for the Allies, and a peace dictated by them. The *moral* was excellent, and the *Frankfurter Zeitung* quoted it as an example to its readers, appealing to them to follow the example of these Frenchmen groaning under the rigours of enemy administration, yet showing no weakness. How was it possible to continue to hold out against the facts as they were presented by the Boche offensive of deception? How was it that we did not lose heart when reverses overwhelmed poor Rumania, and Italy was temporarily shaken? How did we avoid giving way to despair when tottering Russia signed the peace of Brest-Litowsk, freeing for the Western Front the countless divisions of Hindenburg's old army? How was it that we did not lose confidence when the serried masses of the Huns of to-day threatened Amiens, Calais, Paris? It was because patriotism worked miracles such as were manifested in the most critical

## The Moral of the French Population

periods of our history ! Because we had an ineradicable faith in inherent justice, in the victory of Right and Humanity, in the logical triumph of Civilization over Barbarism. Nothing could destroy these immutable hopes, for something inexpressible and vague told each one of us, deep down in his soul, that sweet and beautiful France could not be conquered, that eternal France could never die, and that, as injustice is not a Divine law, we should finally be avenged against our tormentors. Deep hatred kept alive the sacred fire.

But how did we contrive to keep burning this sacred fire of confidence and hope ? This was the task, and let us admit it was an easy one, of those who had shouldered the heavy burden of leadership or who had a certain influence over the populace. No one shirked this urgent duty, and even when the future lowered blacker and blacker with the uncertainty of victory, not one inhabitant of the occupied area would admit for a single instant that defeat was even possible. With us the sacred union which had been proclaimed from the tribune of the Chamber was no empty word. All political opinions and religious faiths were united in a common love of France and a common hatred of the invader.

The first victory of the Marne was the event that filled our hearts with a confidence which remained ready to break out at any moment. It was not known with any certainty in occupied France until the last days of 1914. The gunfire, which since September 12th had been getting nearer, had told us that the Germans had been held and pushed back, but we were ignorant of the importance and result of this gigantic battle of two vast armies, one of which had decided to force a decision, and received a fatal check, from which it never recovered for the rest of the war. We learned the real story of the Marne of 1914 from an article in *Le Temps*, which reached us six weeks after its publication. After that there was no more doubting : from the moment when the Germans, after their tremendous march on the heels of a hurried retreat, were beaten, nothing could stop the impetus of our troops, and the foreigner would eventually be thrown out of France.

"The Marne !" Victory ! Deliverance ! These were the subject of every conversation. Long before the historic



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

words of Pétain, we liked to repeat to each other: "They can do what they like, we shall get them!"

"We shall get them!" was the daily refrain that accompanied the postponement of our hopes. Every year we looked forward to deliverance in the spring or autumn, and, every year, June and October passed without the realization of our desire, but also without the slightest wavering in our faith in victory.

And yet, at the beginning, we were without any definite news; the story-tellers had a great time. We knew they were unauthentic, but in spite of that, they were readily accepted, for they produced a comforting mirage.

How many times did we hear of the taking of Constantinople, Colmar, Metz or Strassburg! Someone had happened to be near the board when the sensational *communiqué* was posted, but they were careful to add that the bulletin had been taken down again at once. No one believed it, but everyone said: "If only it were true!" and we felt happy for a while.

Fantastic dispatch-riders arrived from all directions; and always with news of great victories over the Germans of the following type.

This was a dispatch brought from Fourmies on October 14th, 1914; it reached us on October 19th, and was said to be taken from *Le Temps* of the 12th of that month:

"Battles in the north and on the Aisne.

"These battles have ended in an Allied success.

"There are 200,000 prisoners taken and 50 guns; 200,000 casualties and two ammunition trains fallen into our hands.

"The enemy is retreating on Namur and Waterloo. The main army (the German right wing) is falling back hurriedly on Mons. A junction has been effected between the Belgians and the other Allies at Tournai, Grammont and Roubaix.

"The French are occupying Tournai; the British, Valenciennes.

"William leaves G.H.Q., and orders a retreat on Waterloo.

"Twenty thousand Hindoos have joined the French before Verdun."

## The Moral of the French Population

This document will not bear examination, but we read it all the same with interest. It must be admitted, too, that all the information that reached us was not as fantastic as this. Wireless messages were received during the whole period of the occupation, and a few discreet and privileged persons were able to follow the course of events through the French bulletins, and that in spite of the regulations, the inquiries and the searches of the German military police.

The French and Swiss newspapers were also a great help in maintaining the *moral*. The Germans, however, had taken all possible measures to prevent them from filtering through. They were read all the same. They arrived, sometimes by aeroplane or balloons, sometimes by the agents of the Intelligence Department on special service, and sometimes through German leakage. Orderlies and secretaries of officers on the General Staff or at Imperial Headquarters, tempted by a bribe, or more often with food, brought them secretly and took them back a few hours later. The terrible secret police, so carefully protected against spies, and the *Gazette des Ardennes* itself, were not immune from this leakage, and Bauer or Schnitzer never realized that he was aiding French propaganda in occupied country. Those who were fortunate enough to participate in these benefits were not egoists, and they saw to it that they were shared with their reliable fellow citizens. For our own part, we did our best to spread the news, and when things were critical, to combat the lies of the Press and the German *communiqués*. We were fortunate enough to receive fairly often, secretly, of course, copies of French newspapers, chiefly *L'Echo de Paris*, *Le Temps*, *Le Matin*, *Le Petit Parisien*, *L'Homme Libre*, *La Victoire* and *Le Journal de Genève*. We used to make a résumé of the telegrams and leading articles, of which we made several copies with a typewriter. This résumé, *L'Edition Jaune* (because it was written on yellow paper), was given to several people, who learned it by heart, so as to be able to repeat it to their friends, and destroyed it as soon as their lesson was learned. It was not *La Libre Belgique* of Brussels, and the surveillance of the G.F.P. was too strict for such a scheme to be attempted.

That is how we were able to keep our friends informed.

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

What a debt of gratitude we owe to the French journalists, who helped us to unmask the Boche and never to despair, especially during the agonizing times of Verdun, and from March to July, 1918. Commandant de Civrieux, Lieutenant-Colonel Rousset, General de Lacroix, Gustave Hervé, gave us incalculable help, as did Maurice Barrès, General Cherfils and Marcel Hutin, whose reliable information in *L'Echo de Paris*, and sober and documentary reviews of the military situation, have strengthened the faith of the inhabitants in the ultimate victory. All have deserved well of occupied France. All have roused the fury of the *Gazette*: "For us this was a nomination to the order of La Patrie!"

The prisoners who passed through after every offensive and stopped for a few minutes at Charleville station helped to sustain our hopes. Unknown to the Boches, the manager of the station buffet, an Alsatian patriot, M. Clement Karleskind, who was a prisoner in his buffet, had succeeded in establishing a system of communication with the officers who edited the German lies, and was able to re-establish the truth. All were unanimous that there was no cause for anxiety, and that in the end we should get them. His courageous patriotism brought him into serious trouble. Hated by Bauer, he was subjected to repeated searches, was nearly implicated in several serious cases of espionage, and finally was sent as a hostage to Russia, to the martyrs' camp at Miljegany, near Wilna. This external propaganda, which brought us the fresh air of France, untainted by the defeatist campaign, of which we knew practically nothing, enabled us to hold out. The internal propaganda did the rest.

How was this worked? In the first place, by private conversation, in which everyone tried to stimulate the courage of those who appeared to be weakening, either in private houses or in the few cafés that remained open, among others the "Grande Taverne," the citadel of French resistance, whose proprietors, two proud Alsatian women from Strassburg (the husband had been mobilized and was a prisoner of war), were punished by being expelled from their establishment in 1917, when the place was taken over by a Boche casino.

Then by public speech, by the municipal administration



## The Moral of the French Population

at the funerals of our soldiers who had died of wounds in German hospitals or from ill-treatment by their tormentors, and by the clergy in their sermons, or in the patriotic songs which they taught the children, and which became to us songs of hope and hymns of victory.

At the cemetery we did not hesitate to expound, in the presence of the inspectors sent by the secret police to watch us, love of France, the cult of the flag and the heroism of our troops. In school, the speeches at the distribution of prizes helped to keep alive the patriotism of the children and their faith in the victorious epilogue of the drama.

That is how the inhabitants of the occupied area flaunted their patriotism and their joy in the face of the barbarian. In the churches the priests displayed the same ardour, and the panegyrics of Joan of Arc, at the annual feast day of the national saint, furnished opportunities for comforting discourses. In 1918, the Abbé Bihéry, an eloquent preacher, who every Sunday infused into the souls of his congregation his own confident ardour, had the ingenious idea of substituting all the orders of the day of Joffre, Pétain and Foch, and the speeches of MM. Poincaré and Clemenceau, for the proclamations of the good Lorraine to her soldiers. The police agents present did not understand: the preacher had replaced the German names by English ones, Hindenburg by Talbot, and Ludendorff by Richmond.

The celebration of the national festival of the 14th July, which took the form of a solemn service dedicated to the memory of French and Allied soldiers who had died for their country, and was announced by the following official notice:

" République Française,  
" Fête nationale du 14 Juillet,"

also contributed to strengthen our courage.

These were not the only means by which the French in the occupied area were fortified in their confident resistance. The Germans themselves, incredible though it may seem, were of great assistance in keeping our *moral* firm.

The Boches on their side, principally the private soldiers,



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

indulged in confidences in which they described the distress of their families and their horror of going to the front. The time was long past when they were marching *nach Paris*, and when they said: "Guerre bientôt finie, France kaput" ("War soon over, all up with France"). Their victorious offensives did not inspire them with much enthusiasm, and after every check they did not conceal their discouragement. The prospect of returning to the fighting line, where they feared more than anything else our aeroplanes, caused them irrepressible horror: they did not hide their feelings.

An exhortation from Cardinal Hartmann, Archbishop of Cologne, in Lent, 1916, did not dim our visions of victory. The Boche prelate, exhorting the Kaiser's warriors to keep up their courage in battle, said truly: "Not that we doubt the victorious issue of the war! Oh, no! We have faith in God, in our Right and in our brave soldiers."

He bewailed, however, the heavy losses which were afflicting the German army and bringing mourning into the families, "in which there was not a loved husband, a father, a brother, a fiancé, a relative, a friend, who had not shed his blood in the furious battles or in the narrow trenches, struggling while they bled, for the palm of victory for our Prince and the German Fatherland . . . for God has taken care of us, *who have not rushed criminally into this war, but who, against a whole world of enemies, have to accept an unjust and forced war, for the liberty and existence of the Fatherland. With God! That is the cry with which our Emperor has been forced to draw the sword.*"

Such platitudes as this, even when coming from a German prince of the Roman Church, were not calculated to move us: we were used to them. But the Archbishop thundered against the morals of virtuous Germany, whom he exhorted "not to hinder by her sins the complete and early victory of our just cause."

". . . You, the relatives, and especially you *wives of our soldiers*, are you *circumspect in your behaviour*? Are you keeping a vigilant eye and a firm hand on the education and upbringing of your children, whose father is at the war, or perhaps has fallen and will never return? How many com-

## The Moral of the French Population

plaints have been heard during this war about a definite lack of culture in our young people ! . . .”

But already his Eminence of Cologne was exhorting his flock to resignation ; the shortage of food was beginning to make itself felt. We were very doubtful about it ourselves, but this confirmation from high quarters pleased us, for demoralization was beginning to set in among the Germanic race.

“ . . . And now another point, my people ! The war is *imposing* on us many *inconveniences, limitations and privations*. But what are these sacrifices compared with those of our brave troops, out there in the trenches, on the long battle front in a foreign land ?

“ . . . And certain of us are discouraged, ready to give in : and in their letters to us some soldiers *are said to have despaired as some have certainly already done unknowingly, to the great delight of our enemies*. No. Don't let us make heavy our soldiers' hearts. The stake is enormous ; it is the existence and the liberty of our Fatherland. For that no sacrifice is too great : it behoves us to save from the world conflagration, lit by our enemies, for a better future, the sacred German culture which has bloomed in the sunlight of Christianity.”

Was there not indeed something in this address to encourage us to wait and keep us patient ?

The official German bulletins and the infamous *Gazette* itself, far from depressing us, revived our hopes. We had learned to read the *communiqués* of G.H.Q., and to read into them the truth they did not dare to express. The longer the text, the more high-sounding the phrases, the worse was their situation. We did not allow ourselves to be deceived by defensive victories or rearguard successes. When the bulletin indulged in phenomenal lists of prisoners, guns and material captured, we guessed that the Field Grey was at the end of his tether, and the advance held up ; when they held up, as an example, the heroism of particular regiments, giving the names of their provinces, we told ourselves that the troops were weakening, and that it was necessary to rekindle their enthusiasm ; when the flying men indulged in hecatombs of Allied aeroplanes, we understood that there was deception to be covered.

## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

The *Gazette* no longer had any hold on the credulity of its readers. It had been so often caught in the act of lying that people had ceased to believe its enormities, and the name of *The Liars' Gazette*, given to it by its own news vendors, had been definitely confirmed by public opinion. Prévost did not understand his public. He was clumsy and had a heavy touch. His malevolent and coarse attacks on the French Press had turned people against him. When he replied to the Paris newspapers, when he reproduced accounts of the tumultuous scenes in the Chamber, to exalt the Jean Longuets, the Marcel Cachins, the Brizons and Alexander Blancs, he was obliged to publish extracts from our great papers, or to quote the interruptions of patriotic deputies or the statements of members of the Government. Then our attention was drawn to the French word and the obscenities of the polemist, or the harlequinades of our Bolsheviks were received with scorn. Prévost made us admire Barrès, and Mayeras or Raffin-Dugens made us love Clemenceau, Foch and Pétain. The renegade did us a good turn while he was hoping, with his facile pen, to depress or demoralize us.

At last 1918 was the reward of our clear-sighted constancy. At last a very authoritative voice, which had conducted a very exhaustive inquiry in Germany, as a result of the disturbances in Berlin at the end of 1917, told us: "Bear carefully in mind the serious words I am going to tell you. I have come from Berlin, I have seen, I know—for I have had every opportunity of seeing and knowing. Whatever happens, whatever may be the result of the approaching offensives and the German advance, *the war will be over by the end of next October*. The nation is at the end of its resources and won't hear of war nor of another winter, any more than the troops at the front, and if the Emperor or G.H.Q. want to continue the struggle, very well! The Emperor will be dethroned, and a revolution proclaimed." Prophetic words, which were to be realized on the 11th November following.

Every new offensive depressed the troops, who were gradually realizing that it was impossible to settle with the formidable coalition of the Entente, and that they were allowing themselves to be killed uselessly for the King of Prussia.



## The Moral of the French Population

After the failure of the Compiègne offensive their discouragement knew no bounds. They refused to return to the front, preferring to desert. Desertion developed on a large scale. Openly, in full daylight, the men proposed to the civilians that they should buy their equipment, boots and kit, for an absurd sum. The corridors became depots for cartridges and accoutrements. Every day caps, rifles and haversacks were picked up in the streets and public squares. Rifles and steel helmets were thrown from the passing trains. The prisons, to which the military police had added other buildings commandeered for the purpose, were too small to hold the deserters. On pretext of mercy, they had to be released and sent back to their companies; but, as they had already deserted their post to avoid fighting any more, the Kaiser's faithful soldiers deserted again. Even officers were arrested for the same offence. In August a "kolossal" battue was organized in the outskirts of Charleville and the neighbouring forests: nearly 800 deserters were caught. In short, disorganization spread through every rank! But it was at the end of October that the *débâcle* came to a head.

The German army was in full retreat. They were falling back on the Meuse. The roads were blocked with a confusion of every arm of the service fleeing in disorder. Men were harnessed to the transport wagons; in view of the lack of horses, hundreds of soldiers were pushing wheel-barrows—forming an endless procession. Infantry, artillery, herds of cattle, ambulances, ammunition wagons, streamed along pell-mell. The guns were dragged by two horses, which the drivers unharnessed, abandoning their gun on the road and making off toward Belgium; whole squadrons threw away their arms and broke their ranks. It was a rout in all its horror! We could see that the troops refused to fight any more and were at the mercy of our poilus. So, when we learned that the Armistice had been signed, if we felt relief at the end of all our miseries, if we rejoiced at the cessation of slaughter, which saved the inhabitants of the Meuse valley from certain destruction, our satisfaction was veiled with a slight regret when we realized that Hindenburg's hordes were escaping from Foch's brilliantly conceived trap.



## Behind the Scenes at German Headquarters

A few days more of offensive and the proud German army, caught in the merciless pincers of the Entente, would have capitulated unconditionally. In that case, Germany, definitely crushed, would not have been able to raise her head again as she is doing at the present moment. One consolation, however, relieved our bitterness: the German Empire, born in 1870, as a result of the disaster of Sedan, had come to a miserable end, before this same Sedan!

In their generous anxiety to stop the flow of blood and the heaping up of destruction, were our great statesmen right or wrong? The future will show.

In any case, as a result of this Armistice, Germany, in spite of everything, is incapable of offering serious resistance. We must take advantage of her impotence. If she had been victorious she would have imposed her peace conditions with implacable rigour. We who have lived among them more than four years, and know their disciplined mentality, know how they respect force. We have had personal experience, and can say, without vanity, that, if we have escaped much annoyance, even though we were justly suspected by the German police, and were strictly watched, it is because we managed to maintain before them an attitude of absolute firmness, without overstepping the limits of correct behaviour and our definite rights.

This indulgence, small though it may be, is a proof of the weakness of the hypocritical and cunning German. His policy is made up of procrastination and lies. Let us not be deceived, and let us remember the old proverb: "*Poignez vilain, il vous oindra; oignez vilain, il vous poindra.*" ("Hurt a knave and he will flatter you: flatter him and he will hurt you.")

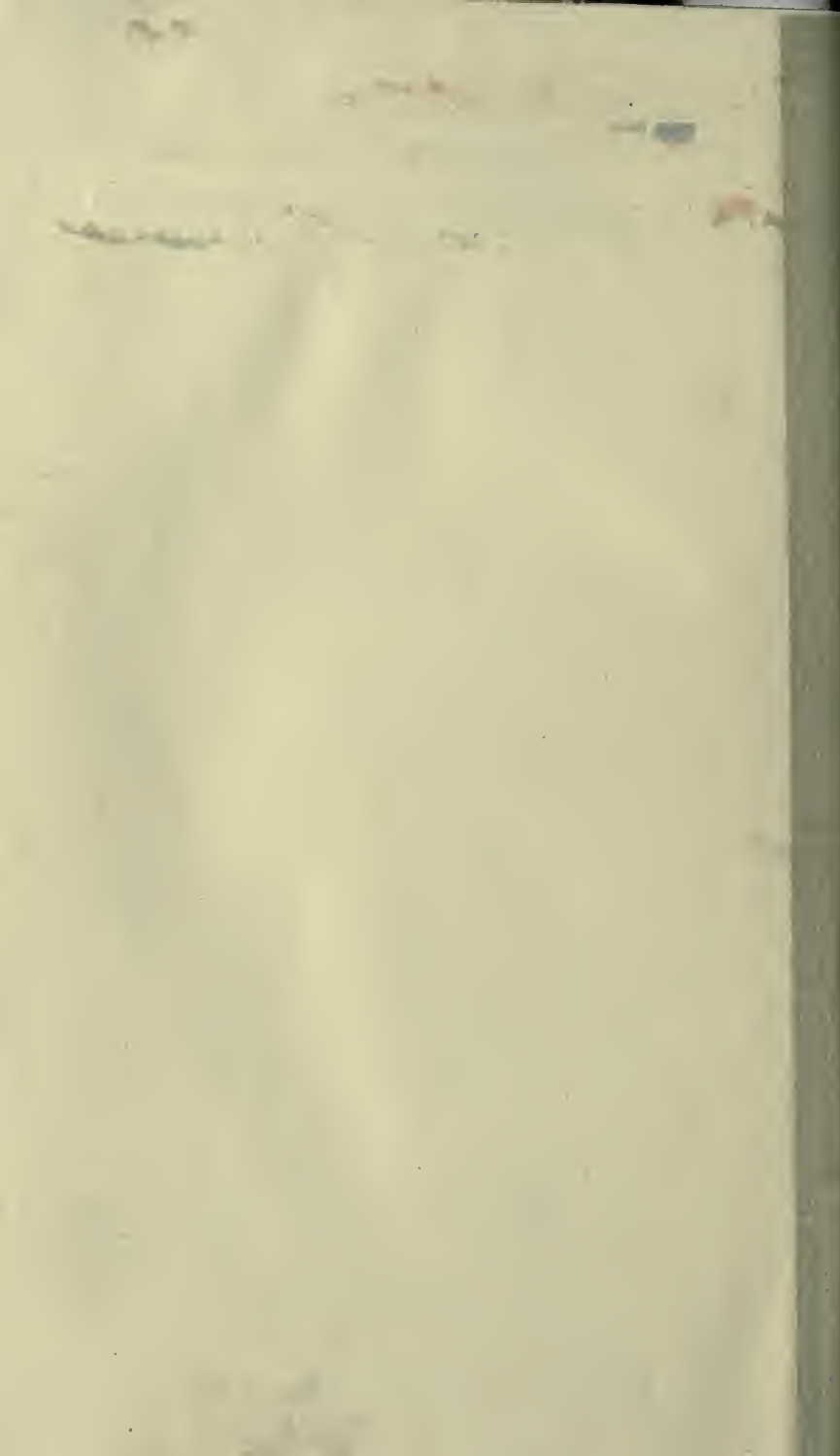
It is the only way to make a lasting peace with this beast of prey.

The German can only be kept peaceful by fear: he only obeys the whip!

THE END

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